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By EDGAR MAYHEW BACON

Narragansett Bay: Its Historic and Romantic Associations

8°. Uniform with "The Hudson River." With 70 Illustrations

The Hudson River from Ocean to Source

Historical—Legendary—Picturesque

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Narragansett Bay

Its Historic and Romantic Associations and Picturesque Setting

By

Edgar Mayhew Bacon

Author of "The Hudson River from Ocean to Source"
"Chronicles of Tarrytown and Sleepy Hollow," etc.

Illustrated with Fifty Drawings by the Author
and with Numerous Photographs

G. P. Putnam's Sons
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1904

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Preface

THE appreciative reception given by the reviewers and by the public to *The Hudson River from Ocean to Source*, has encouraged the author of that work to present in a similar form another volume emphasising the unique beauty and commemorating the great historic interest and the legendary charm of Rhode Island's noble bay.

The preparation of this study of Narragansett Bay has afforded a fascinating occupation for several years. The collection of material for it has not only necessitated the examination of old records but has led to eventful cruises among the islands, visits to famous landmarks, sojourns in picturesque towns, and acquaintance with many delightful people whose courtesy in facilitating the collection of material calls for grateful acknowledgment.

Impressed by the important and singular part played by the settlers of Narragansett in the development of American ideas and ideals, and strongly attracted by the romantic tales that are inwoven with the warp of history, as well as by the incomparable setting the great bay affords for such a subject, the author offers this

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result of his labour as a contribution to the story of great American Waterways, with the hope that his readers may be imbued with somewhat of his own enthusiasm.

E. M. B.

New York, May, 1904.

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Narragansett Bay

Narragansett Bay

Introductory

THE Skeleton in Armour meets us on the threshold of all investigation into early Narragansett history. He lays claim to more than one eligible site in New England and resists eviction by the very ambiguity of the evidence upon which his claims are based.

The ancient sagas of the Northmen are the documents relied upon by historians for our meagre knowledge of facts now generally accepted concerning the early voyagers to the shores of North America. No student to-day would dream of admitting the claim of Columbus to priority as the discoverer of America. Bjarni Herjulfsen, who sailed from Iceland toward Greenland in the year 986, and was driven by stress of weather into a far and wonderful country, and Leif the son of Eric, who fourteen years later was incited by Bjarni's story to follow his course, must both have seen the pleasant shores of New England, but beyond this we can be sure of nothing. The sum of our wisdom on

this head is contained in two statements which may be taken as authoritative. Professor Max Müller, speaking of the knowledge of America possessed by the countrymen of Bjarni and Leif, said: "I have met with nothing to shake my belief that the Northmen possessed such knowledge," while from Bancroft's conclusion that "the soil of the United States has not one vestige of their presence," there is to-day no noteworthy dissent.

Professor Rafn years ago identified Rhode Island as the "Vineland" of the Northmen, while Anderson, Goodrich, Haven, and others have followed his lead. There was a time when the country went mad over the theories of the Swedish antiquaries and their American disciples, and swallowed relics with a good mediæval fervour. Longfellow was only one of the thousands who caught the infection, and his poems upon the alleged Norse tower at Newport, and the greatly misunderstood armed skeleton, dug up at Fall River, showed him no more credulous than his neighbours. Actually the skeleton "in rude armour dressed" was arrayed in nothing more convincing than a brass or copper plate or shield over his breast, a belt made of cylinders of the same metal arranged not unlike a modern cartridge-belt, and a quantity of arrow heads, all of which details of costume are known to have been peculiar to Indians living within thirty miles of Fall River and not to the Northmen. Moreover, the mode of burial, the skeleton having been found sitting bolt upright, indicates the Indian and not the Scandinavian.

Inscribed rocks have been found in several places near Mount Hope. At Hopeworth, on the west shore of Mount Hope Bay, is one, at Dighton another, and still others at Tiverton and Portsmouth. That at Dighton, upon the Taunton River, where the stream, though less than half a mile broad, has a tide-rise of several feet, was first mentioned in 1680, when white men had been

ROCK INSCRIPTION AT HOPEWORTH ON MT. HOPE BAY. ATTRIBUTED TO THE NORTHMEN

in the neighbourhood for half a century or more. Cotton Mather, about the year 1700, gave a description of a rock at Taunton and alluded to the fact that it is partly covered at very high tide, speaking also of the lines as being "very deeply engraved, no man knows when or how."

We have a hint of the rate of effacement or obliteration by tide erosion. In the first decade of the 19th century the lines of the Dighton Rock inscription were, by actual measurement, one inch broad and half an inch deep. In 1875 they were described as almost indistinguishable, except under very close inspection,

while to-day there is merely a trace of them remaining. In other words, we have the rate of destruction, roughly stated, one half inch in a century. To have endured since the time of Leif the Lucky, the inscription must therefore have been originally at least five inches in depth and each line not less than five inches in breadth. To have allowed space between the lines at all commensurate with such a width, the distance between centre and centre should be at least ten inches. In the case of the Mount Hope Bay inscription, where the rock is much softer and the destruction consequently much more rapid, the whole surface of the bowlder would not have sufficed for a fraction of the lines that compose the inscription. Nor can we conceive that a warrior or sailor with such implements as may have been found in Leif's vessel, could have cut any one of the hieroglyphs upon the colossal scale implied.

Runes composed of lines nearly half a foot in width and depth, were, I believe, quite beyond the skill of any stonecutter of that day and race. I have several times examined the Mount Hope Bay rock within the past five years and I find the change in that time very marked—there is hardly anything left of it. Formerly it was above tide water, but has been carried down within the past half-century to its present bed and is now washed daily by the waves.

The best answer that we can return to the claims of Leif and his Northmen to the settlement of Mount Hope is the Scotch verdict of "not proven," though

by the same testimony the claim is not disproven. The description of the saga is not minute in all particulars, but it is graphic and certainly suggests Mount Hope Bay as well as it does any spot upon the New England coast—perhaps a little better.

There is much stronger evidence to support the theory that Verrazani, called sometimes a French navigator, but more justly a Florentine corsair, sailing in 1524 under a commission from Francis I, discovered Narragansett Bay and landed where Newport now stands. Of course there has been dissent and discussion, and Verrazani and his map have been a bone of contention to many wise geographers, but nevertheless it does appear that the water that he called the Bay of Refuge, and which afterwards came to be called the Bay of St. John the Baptist, is the same to which we give the more musical Indian name Narragansett, and that the island that he named Louisa, after the king's mother, was that which now bears the name of its later discoverer, the Dutch navigator Adrian Block.

Block attached a number of names that stuck, but not all of his titles were adhesive. He named the main body of water, the great bay itself, after the prince of Nassau. Block, with the patient painstaking of a good sailor, made exhaustive soundings of the bay and all its arms and tributaries and prepared a chart that could leave no chance for controversy as to the waters he claimed to have explored.

A very brief glance at the geology of the Narra-

gansett region may not be amiss in this place. We find that the tract of land lying between Providence and Greenwich Bay "bounded westerly by a line running about half a mile east of Olneyville, to the N. W. extremity of Greenwich Bay, and easterly to an irregular line from half a mile to two miles west of Providence Bay, etc.," belongs to the Tertiary period. All that part of the State west of Greenwich and Kingstown is composed of primary rock, which also occurs in the lower end of Conanicut Island and through the eastern part of Newport. The western end of Newport is of metamorphic rock with many bowlders piled along the shores. All of the remainder of Aquidneck, Conanicut, Prudence, and the main shore of Narragansett Bay, except the western half of Bristol (which is primary rock), is transition grau-wacke.

In various localities iron and other minerals appear, and numerous fields of peat are found in some parts of the State. The north end of Rhode Island (*i. e.*, Aquidneck) contains coal, but of a quality that has not proved profitable when put upon the market.

Block Island is of Diluvian formation. A line drawn northward from Wickford on the west side of the bay through Olneyville and from Lymans north-west to the Massachusetts border, marks a sharp line of division between the primary rock of the western half of the state and the transition gr. wacke and Tertiary formations of the land bordering or surrounded by the bay. West of the upper part of such a line is a strip four or five miles

CRYSTAL ROCK, AT THE FOOT OF MOUNT HOPE, NEARLY OPPOSITE FALL RIVER. IT IS COMPOSED OF WHITE QUARTZ, WITH INFERIOR CRYSTALS OF GARNET INTERSPERSED

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in width and about eighteen miles in length, of hornblende, with numerous ledges of limestone.

Tiverton and Little Compton, east of the bay, are composed of primary rock, and correspond with the east half of Bristol Neck, while the upper end of Rhode Island, thrust between them, is of transition gr. wacke. Mount Hope is composed of granite upon its western side and white quartz on the eastern.

Near the eastern base of Mount Hope, forming part of the gateway of the bay, there is a striking promontory of white quartz interspersed with inferior crystals of garnet. This headland, appropriately named "crystal rock," rises almost abruptly and without verdure of any kind to a height of forty or fifty feet and is covered on the top with a grove of cedars and junipers.

Narragansett Bay is so irregular in its outline that it is difficult to make a word picture that will convey any clear idea of its contour. Providence lies at the extreme northern end, at the head of a long estuary that is known as the Providence River. Upon the western shore of the bay on an irregular line, the general direction of which from Providence is a little west of south, there are among others the historic landmarks of Pawtuxet, Warwick, East Greenwich, Wickford, Kingston, Narragansett, and Point Judith. Beyond Point Judith southward is Haiti, and eastward the coast of Europe.

The other shore runs south-easterly from Providence through several towns to Bristol, where it curves sharply

east and northward and, forming the beautiful and irregular sheet of water known as Mount Hope Bay, makes a southerly line from Fall River through Tiverton and Little Compton, to the extreme point of Saconnet, which forms the south-eastern extremity of the Saconnet River.

Between the two shores thus roughly described there are three large islands that divide the bay into separate channels. The greatest of these islands is the most easterly one and is known as Aquidneck or Rhode Island. Its upper extremity extends into Mount Hope Bay and its southern capes are washed by the Atlantic Ocean. The arm of the bay that flows between Aquidneck and the eastern shore is called the Saconnet or Seaconnet River, though properly it is not a river, but a strait, and so it used to be called upon the old maps. Portsmouth is at one end of Aquidneck Island, and Newport at the other.

The second island in size, Conanicut, has not more than one-fifth of Aquidneck's area. It splits the bay between Newport and the Kingstown shore into two long, irregular channels. The third of the large islands is Prudence, the upper end of which is almost midway between Bristol and Warwick, and the lower end midway between Aquidneck and the north end of Conanicut.

Besides these larger islands there are almost innumerable smaller ones, some of which have names that suggest the trials of navigators in the days before the use of steam. There is a story told of a Bristol child,

11 MOUNT HOPE. THE SUPPOSED "HOP" OF THE NORSEMEN AND LATER THE HEADQUARTERS OF KING PHILIP

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who when asked in Sunday School to repeat a verse from the Bible, shut her eyes and chanted

> "Prudence, Patience, Hope, and Despair,
> And little Hog Island right over there."

Before the advent of the white men and for many years afterwards the shores and islands of Narragansett Bay were covered with luxuriant forests, except in a few places where the Indians cleared the ground for some purpose. The islands, now in many cases practically denuded of trees, owe their devastation to the British encampments during the War for Independence. If imagination can add to the present beauty of this great labyrinth of waters the charm of that abundant verdure described by early navigators and historians, the picture will be one of unexampled loveliness.

Scattered throughout the bay a few capes, islands, and estuaries bear the names of early settlers whose descendants in some cases form an important fraction of the present population. We have Dyer's Island, Brenton's Reef, Coggeshall's Cove, etc., to perpetuate the memories of men who were once leaders in council and in war. Some of the place names are Indian and many of them are mere navigator's names, handed down from generation to generation since the visit of Adrian Block. The island which bears the Dutch navigator's own name is in the Atlantic Ocean, ten miles to the south-east of Point Judith, but it belongs to Newport County and may properly be included in the present work.

The modern history of Narragansett Bay could almost be told in the biographies of a few prominent men. Rhode Island presents an anomalous record, of a pioneer democracy with powerful leaders whose ascendency amounted almost to chieftainship. Such leaders were Williams, at Providence and after him Chad Brown and his descendants; the Potters (Hopestill Potter and his son Simeon) at Bristol; Coggeshall, Coddington, Clarke, Brenton, and their companions at Newport; Wanton at Tiverton; Samuel Gorton at Warwick; the Greenes at East Greenwich; Benedict Arnold at Pawtucket; the Hazards and others in Kings County, and so on to the end of the chapter. These were the men who with their companions made the little State, and by their progeny helped to people it, while by marriage their descendants have not only established a general relationship with each other but have absorbed also the best of the outside element that sought homes among them during the long colonial period.

Chapter II

From Providence to Cowesett

ALL the world knows that when Roger Williams was driven out of Massachusetts and called a troublesome fellow by the Puritan elders, who could not brook any suggestion that seemed to impugn their infallibility, he came with his few forlorn friends to the place that is now Providence. The Indians welcomed him in words that tradition has preserved: "Wha Cheer, Natop," which has been variously translated, but seems to have been at least a friendly and complimentary fashion of "passing the time o' day."

Within a few years of its settlement Providence had an unsavory reputation for lawlessness, if the reports of its Puritan enemies may be credited, and even if we discount those prejudiced accounts, there is still reason to believe that the principles of liberty preached by Williams had attracted a number of ungovernable spirits, whose excesses were for several years beyond the leader's control. That this initial attempt to found a city at the head waters of Narragansett Bay was grandly successful, in spite of the dangers and difficulties that at first beset it, was due almost entirely to the wonderful personality

of that leader, who in face of opposition and lawlessness finally shaped its destinies.

Williams' suffering must have been great, as he was

THE UPPER ARM OF NARRAGANSETT BAY, CALLED PROVIDENCE RIVER. IN THE DISTANCE IS THE CITY OF PROVIDENCE

obliged to take to the wilderness in the depth of a New England winter, at a time when he was in poor health. He found a refuge in the wigwams of the Indians, to whom he aspired to be a teacher, and he had no means of subsistence but their coarse and scanty fare; yet he not only lived but became physically strong, bearing for years the brunt of a great enterprise, the fatigues of strenuous missions and long journeys, and the harassing cares of a community often ungrateful and nearly always unwise. He lived to a great age and saw the handful

that he planted in the wilderness grow to a mighty harvest.

It is a fact that Williams not only retained trade relations with the colony from which he had been exiled, but was in close correspondence and upon terms of personal friendship with several of the leading men of the Massachusetts colony. Winthrop, the elder, was his associate in the purchase of Prudence Island and in other ventures, and these two remarkable men remained throughout their lives on a footing of intimacy. Sir Henry Vane was another of Williams's close friends; yet the latter could not set foot upon the soil of that colony where their names were honoured, nor would their associates recognise his right even to the ground he had reclaimed from the untenanted forest.

The Bay settlers of Boston and Salem were glad enough to avail themselves of the exiled leader's kind offices and influence to avert the horrors of Indian war; but they offered no recognition of his invaluable services, and, actually refusing to permit him to embark for England from a Massachusetts port, forced him to seek that privilege from the Dutch at New York.

Williams's influence with the Indians was practically unbounded. No chief could have exerted a greater control over those restless, untrained spirits than did this dearly loved member of a race that was both hated and dreaded. When after several successful efforts to restrain their animosity, excited by the injustice and unreasonable severity of the whites, he at last found

them implacable, they even then respected his person and expressed their affection for him. Providence had for years been spared the arrow and the firebrand because of his presence there, but finally, when Williams was an old man, the city was threatened with destruction. Bravely as of old the leader went out, alone and unarmed, to meet the invaders, but for once his arguments and his pleas were unavailing. He was told that because he was an honest man not a hair of his head would be harmed, but that the city should be burned. It was a startling commentary upon the number of honest men the savages had discovered in Providence.

One of the intimates of Roger Williams, was the Rev. Chad Brown, the ancestor of that John Brown who stood first among the old merchants of Providence at the breaking out of the war for Independence, and whose nephew gave his name to Brown University. As I have indicated in the account of Bristol in another chapter, the energetic inciter of the Gaspee adventure became a progenitor of several lines of prominent Rhode Islanders and is looked upon as one of the remarkable men of his generation.

It was a distinction to be at the forefront of the business activity of Providence in the days when India wharf was something more than a name. Then the ships from the Orient brought their freight to a good market and the old stone warehouses that have weathered the storms of more than a century and a half, held their fat sides in content as the bales and

boxes and barrels were stowed in their recesses. What an unctuous sound have the street names in an old Providence directory. Gold and Silver, Bond and Money streets mark the once opulent business end of

GROUP OF SAILBOATS ON PROVIDENCE RIVER

town, but are now decayed and become dingy harbourers of small affairs.

Rum, molasses, and slaves; slaves, molasses, and rum —how the old merchants juggled with these staple articles of a profitable trade, sending Jamaica rum to

Africa for negroes, and sending African negroes to Jamaica for rum; finding a rich profit in both ends of the trade. Had Jamaica been obliged to seek and import her own negroes she could no more have done it than Africa could supply herself with rum. The canny New Englander must slip between. Let no self-righteous Gothamite hold up virtuous hands in horror at the moral obliquity that indulged in such ventures. New York had her own slave traders and her own privateersmen and her own traders in "rum and other necessaries of life," and even Connecticut, "the land of steady habits," was not above an occasional African venture on her own hook.

Providence lies at the very head of the bay, and that arm, which is called Providence River, terminates abruptly, to all appearances, at a bridge that the people of the city fondly proclaim to be the broadest in the world. Under busy streets the waters of the Moshausick seek the bay. It was not the Moshausick but the Seekonk River that Roger Williams descended in his canoe, coming down through Pawtucket. His landing-place was almost upon the outskirts of the present city.

If it is true that the cattle of the settlers were the original surveyors of Boston streets, one regrets that they were not employed in a similar capacity in Providence. Imagination fails to picture the demented beast that first tracked the clewless layrinth between Roger Williams Park on the south and the tangled web of streets beyond the new State House. That State

House, beautiful, dignified, almost imposing (it would be absolutely so were it not for its neighbourhood of car sheds and other abominations), is of white marble and is surmounted by a dome of pleasing proportions. It marks an important political change in Rhode Island, when instead of two capitals and capitols, the State resolved to content itself with one, and abandoned the historic old building at Newport to its ghosts.

To write a history or guide book of Providence, is no part of the plan of this book, but, at the risk of repeating a well-worn truth, I must point once more to its meaning and mission. In this little city, twentieth in point of population among the cities of the United States, the principle of absolute liberty of conscience and the complete divorcement of Church and State was not only announced as a theory but was actually, for the first time in the history of the world, adopted as a practical policy. Consider the importance of this marvellous initiative. It was breaking adrift from the traditions of all nations and all times, and making a new departure in government—a departure in which Rhode Island was in time followed by Massachusetts and the other American colonies.

When William Coddington and his Antinomian companions passed through Providence they were warmly welcomed and no doubt were impressed by the newly promulgated rules by which Williams and his company had bound themselves, but upon establishing the settlements upon Aquidneck the Coddington

company failed to establish so complete a conception of liberty. They extended to all Christians the boon of free conscience, and in that they were in advance of the rest of the world—but Providence proclaimed freedom of conscience to all men of all creeds, whether they were Christians, Mahommedans, Jews, or Confucians.

The history of Rhode Island, or of any part of it, can never be written or read justly without a comprehension of that underlying leaven that, hid in so mean and unpromising a measure, has leavened the world's thought and influenced, more than any other factor, the course of human progress.

There are in Providence, and particularly in the neighbourhood of Brown University, some stately mansions of the later colonial time, houses that suggest generous living and a more careful attention than the earlier settlers could afford to all the finer proprieties of life. The University was incorporated in 1769 and at first took rank with the older institutions of learning in the country, but soon declined and for a number of years was of little account. Afterwards, under the direction of the Rev. Francis Wayland, Jun., it commenced again to rise. Seventy-five years ago the following description of the University was published: "Under its present able and judicious president it has attained a handsome elevation and promises to become one of the best seats of learning in the Union. The library has lately been much increased by donations from England; and the philosophical apparatus, which is extensive, is constantly

23 THE BEAUTIFUL GATES OF BROWN UNIVERSITY, OPENING UPON A CAMPUS SHADED BY FINE ELM TREES ON COLLEGE HILL, PROVIDENCE

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improving. The college edifices, of which there are two, are located on a lofty eminence, with streets leading thereto, richly decorated with fine mansions and elegant gardens. About a mile still further east or north-east, stands a large building called the Quaker college. It was built by Friends and is occupied as a boarding school of that persuasion, and is in excellent order."

The Quaker school is still "in excellent order" and is a flourishing institution, but who would ever recognise the "two edifices" of Brown University in the large and still growing cluster of buildings that fronts its beautiful campus. Brown is now, as it was then, a Baptist stronghold; while the Friends still hold absolute control of their venerable school. These institutions are reminders of an earlier time, when the Baptist influence was greatest in Providence and that of the Quakers second.

The principal residential portion of the city has always been upon "the Hill," as it is called. Upon the ground first occupied by Roger Williams a succession of Rhode Island governors lived for a century and a half. The west side of the Moshausick was built upon at a later day and is more commercial in character, but the really old centre of business activity lies toward India Point, along the water front. There the earliest settlers had apportioned their plats of ground, sufficient for gardens and dwellings or stores, each with a frontage upon the "towne street" and rear access to tide water.

When people began to consider the problem of contact with the outer world, for which purpose the fragile

canoes of the Indians were obviously inadequate, they began to build sloops and schooners, at which art they soon became adept, so that a Providence shipyard could turn out more and better work in a given time than could be produced anywhere else in America, or perhaps in the world. There were fashioned the swift old merchantmen of colonial times, the Indiamen and slave ships; there the redoubtable privateers, that had no equal on the face of the waters, grew with almost the rapidity of Jonah's gourd. There, in Revolutionary days the infant navy of the United States came into being, and sailed thence to harass the less agile ships of Great Britain. Sloops and schooners — of which I have spoken — there were in plenty, and many of these traded down the bay, employed in the local commerce between Providence, Newport, and the Narragansett country.

Reference has been made to the great Providence fire during the Indian troubles, near the end of Williams's life. At that time fifty houses in the northern part of the town were destroyed; it is said that only one of the very oldest houses survived. Warwick at this time also suffered great loss, cattle being stolen and crops damaged so that the settlers found themselves absolutely destitute. Many of them fled for safety to hardly less exposed settlements, some to Aquidneck, where the inhabitants of Newport and Portsmouth received them with the greatest hospitality. The "house of the four chimneys" on Brenton's Neck was an asylum for many

of the destitute refugees, who had finally shared in the retribution so long invited by Massachusetts.

Among the early legends of Providence there are several connected with the direful conflagration.

Upon the river bank, at Kettle Point, not far from the little city, there lived a man named Lewis, who did something of a freight business about the bay. Lewis had for a neighbour an Indian called Quanto, and between these two there had grown up a mutual respect and liking. It may be that the red-skin in his wigwam and the white man in his cabin did not discover in each other much difference either in habits or aims of life. They probably both lived on very intimate terms with nature, and wrested a living from the wilderness by the exercise of similar courage and capacity.

At that time when the relations between aborigines and settlers were at a tension, and the men of the forest and the men of the settlement glowered at each other across the stockades, Lewis got ready his sloop to go to Newport. He made light of the fears of his countrymen—this storm, he was sure, would pass by as others had done, and Williams's palaver with the sachems would be successful in averting danger, as it always had been.

As Lewis was about starting, his friend Quanto came to him and asked a favour. There were his two young children; would his white brother take them on his boat to Aquidneck, where their grandmother lived, and give

them into her keeping so that they might remain in safety till peace was assured. The errand was undertaken and successfully accomplished. Quanto's children were handed over to the old squaw and Lewis was returning to Providence when he heard the dreadful news of the Indian attack.

Filled with consternation for his own family, the master of the sloop made what speed he could to Kettle Point and was rejoiced to find his wife and children still unharmed, though in imminent peril. Hurrying them on board his boat, he set sail immediately for Newport, the glare of the burning village of Providence behind him furnishing a sufficient incentive to haste. The first few miles of the journey were accomplished without interruption, and Lewis began to hope that he might escape. His wife, worn out with her anxiety, was asleep in the little cabin, with her children besides her. Just as the sloop was gliding like a ghost past Warwick Neck, a canoe shot out of the shadow and a hooked line was thrown into the rigging.

"Where are Quanto's children?" came the voice of an Indian from the canoe.

Under the influence of fear Lewis lied. "They are here, safe in my sloop."

The canoe was hauled close to the stern of the white man's boat. "Hand Quanto's children over to us," came the command.

Not daring to acknowledge his falsehood, and terrified lest the savages should board his craft and put

them all to the tomahawk, Lewis yielded to the reiterated command and going into the cabin took up his unconscious children. Mrs. Lewis, sleeping heavily, had not heard the dialogue between her husband and the men in the canoe: she half roused when he took the

THE CANOE WAS HAULED UNDER THE STERN OF THE WHITE MAN'S BOAT

children from her, but he quieted her with a word, and delivered the youngsters to the Indians.

As the canoe parted company with the sloop Lewis called out: "I have made a mistake and have given you my own children. Quanto's are here with me." At that moment a puff of wind fortunately filled his sails and he escaped, cherishing, as an offset to his fear, the hope that Quanto's children might be hostages for the safety

of his own. What Lewis's wife said when he confessed his cowardice or craftiness we have no way of knowing, but imagination pictures a scene that must have been beyond description, nor do we believe that his life for the next few days was an enviable one.

In the end the affair turned out much better than might have been expected, for the white man's little ones were held in captivity only till the safety of the Indian's brood had been assured. It seems that Quanto had been killed in the fight at Providence, and the Indians in the canoe were under the leadership of a brother warrior, who had attempted, in the manner described, to save the offspring of his friend.

Opposite Kettle Point, and a short distance east of Roger Williams Park (now a place of public resort) the Continentals in 1775–6, built a fort upon the high bluff that crowns Field Point. The earth-works can still be seen from the railroad, and, in the days of short-range guns, with those upon the eastern shore, formed an effectual protection to the city. Just below these points, which are to the harbour what the neck is to a bottle, lies a little island, the site for a beacon that bears the suggestive name of Starvegoat Island. The mind of man probably never conceived a more suggestive synonym for barrenness.

The shores of Providence River are dotted with villages and private estates, and among them they harbour a goodly number of local traditions, bits of history or of romance. From Pawtucket down the whole

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THE SHORES OF PROVIDENCE RIVER

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stretch of Warwick shore there is not a bay or a little cape that has not been the scene of some exciting adventure in colonial days, either when the Indians were upon the war-path, or during the still more unsettled time when British revenue boats were poking into every nook and corner for contraband goods.

Warren, one of the most delightful as well as important of the older towns, lies between Barrington and Bristol, upon a river of its own name. With Bristol it shared the troublesome visits of British troops in the Revolution, and furnished its quota of men for the Continental army.

The greatest event that has ever distinguished any part of the Providence River, was the burning of the Gaspee, on Nanquit Point, nearly opposite Barrington. This occurrence was of such singular interest that I have given to it, and the incidents that preceded it, a separate chapter.

From Warwick we take another excursion into the earliest history of the colony. When that much misunderstood man, Samuel Gorton, headed the third party of those who had found Massachusetts too warm for them, he came first to Providence, as Coddington and his companions had done; but he and Roger Williams could not agree then, nor ever fully. Gorton absolutely denied the right of any man, or body of men, to govern unless they were commissioned by king or parliament, and as Williams held no such commission his visitor did much to embarrass him. At last Gorton, with eleven

companions, bought Shawomet from the Indians, and at once commenced to build a blockhouse there.

As Massachusetts had cast covetous eyes upon that very strip of shore, it followed that Gorton was besieged in his strong house, and having been captured was taken in irons to Boston, to be tried for heresy. In this

WARWICK NECK, AT THE ENTRANCE TO COWESETT BAY

case the sentiment of the people was so strongly expressed that the elders did not dare to proceed to extreme lengths against Gorton and his friends, but banished them from Massachusetts, whence they returned to Rhode Island.

It should be said that before settling upon Shawomet for the first time, the founder of Warwick had been whipped publicly at Aquidneck, as a turbulent fellow;

but when he returned the second time he was received with the sympathy which generous natures afford to misfortune. Not going at once to Warwick, he was elected to a magistracy in Newport, but when Williams had obtained the first charter or patent, which in Gorton's eyes legalised the government of the colony, he commenced to rebuild Warwick, which in course of time became the third place in importance in Rhode Island. The earliest organisation of the General Court included Providence, Newport, Portsmouth, and Warwick.

When Coddington tried to usurp the rights of the people of Newport, and obtained a separate patent for himself as governor of that settlement, Providence and Warwick stood together and urged Williams to go to England to secure a confirmation of their charter. To supply himself with funds for this expedition, Williams sold his trading house, impoverishing himself for the public good.

Brown University was actually born at Warwick, the purpose of the establishment being to give to Baptist youth those educational advantages which were enjoyed by the people of other denominations. It was known as the Rhode Island College, and its constitution required that the president should be a Baptist. In a short time it was removed to Provider.ce and located upon the site it now occupies.

The full story of Warwick would be a political history of Rhode Island, of which the reader will pardon the omission. The township is the most important in Kent

County, the value of its realty and the personal property held there exceeding East and West Greenwich and Coventry combined. Some of its legends, and the more romantic incidents connected with its story, will be touched upon in connection with East Greenwich and the region about Cowesett Bay.

During those years when Newport and the lower islands were in the hands of the British foe, and the traders from the upper part of the bay were not only doing all in their power to render the blockade ineffectual, but were also making what provisions they could for defence, a battery was built near the southern end of Warwick Neck, not far from where the lighthouse now stands. It commanded the entrance to Cowesett Bay. This work was erected during the early part of the invasion, and while the militia were ordered out to make what defence they might, the women and children were advised to flee to inland towns, where at least they would be removed from immediate danger. There seems, however, to have been no very general exodus. It was at that time that the seven hundred troops constituting Rhode Island's army were encamped at Bristol and Tiverton.

Samuel Gorton and his associates in 1641, before going to Shawomet, settled in Pawtuxet, on land purchased of Robert Cole. Arnold, one of Williams's companions, and the progenitor of the numerous Arnolds of Rhode Island, strenuously opposed this settlement, and his animosity had weight in inducing Gorton's withdrawal to Shawomet, in 1642–3.

The Royal patent, which included Shawomet, was granted through the influence of the Earl of Warwick, and in gratitude to him his name was given to the township afterwards formed. That township includes a

SAMUEL GORTON'S LEATHER BREECHES,
NOW IN POSSESSION OF MRS. SAM CLARKE

number of villages, those of Warwick and Apponaug being among the oldest. Samuel Gorton lived about a mile from the present village of Apponaug, on the road leading to the summer-excursion resort of Rocky Point. Nothing to-day remains of the pioneer's house

but one piece of wood that was cut from a rafter at the time that the building was demolished, and that afterwards did service as a gate-post for several years. I found this relic, along with Gorton's leather breeches, table, spinning-wheel, and other venerable treasures, in the possession of Mrs. Sam Clarke, a lineal descendant of Samuel Gorton. This lady, now living in East Greenwich, has inherited, along with many priceless antiques, a loyal spirit of veneration for the memories and the household impedimenta of her forbears.

At old Warwick village nothing remains but a straggling, country community, living in a place that retains but the ghost of its former dignity and importance. At the crossroads stands a decrepit old house that wears the tags and tatters of old-time royalty upon a frame, the symmetry of which even neglect and dirt cannot entirely destroy. This is the melancholy ruin of the old Assembly house, a reminder of the time when old Warwick was one of the three capitals of the colony, but now a squalid spectre, standing under immemorial elms. In shape, this building is almost a cube, but relieved by the overhang of the roof upon all four sides, the cornice being supported by small and graceful brackets. At the front door there is a unique porch, the cap of which is concave and rests upon brackets of the same shape as those above, but much larger. Over the door some thoughtful person has placed the date of the erection of this old house—1726. Its glory departed, the voices of legislators no longer heard in its

OLD CHURCH AT APPONAUG

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chambers, the dignified, gracious mansion has become a tenement for foreigners, the grime of whose unwashed hands has discolored the doorposts, and the brilliant hues of whose scanty wardrobes enliven the clothes-line perspective at the rear.

Diagonally across the street from the old Assembly house is a mansion of red brick, once a beautiful colonial dwelling, but now fallen and degraded. Near these landmarks stands another, also going to ruin. It is the old Baptist church of Warwick, which was removed to its present site some years ago, and has since been used as a store or warehouse.

With the decay of old Warwick village a newer and livelier centre has sprung up on Warwick Neck, which, from its proximity to the water, makes a pleasant place of residence, and is becoming a popular resort in the summer months. The most prominent landmark on the Neck, is a stone tower built by Senator Aldrich upon his estate, and visible from almost every high hill in Rhode Island.

Apponaug is now the metropolis of Warwick township, and boasts a very substantial town hall and court house. It is neither a very populous nor a very active centre, but it cherishes some interesting and distinctive features, and points with pride to several distinguished sons.

The old Pequot trail, that was a highway for the savages before King Philip's day, is still the highway for modern palefaces, and trembles every hour of the day

under the rush of the trolley, as it comes up from East Greenwich. Just before reaching the Corners or intersection of the two main streets in Apponaug, the trail turns sharply to the east and parallels the highway about two rods to the south. It is still at this point clearly visible. Near by, at the shore, there may be found a deep shell-bed several hundred feet in extent, which was one of the recognised "mints" for the Indian manufacture of "peage," or wampum, which was made from the blue part of the small clam shells.

At a distance of about two miles from Apponaug, in a westerly direction, there is a curious boulder, so held in the hollow of its stony bed that it can be rocked without overturning. It makes a deep bell-like sound that could formerly be heard for a considerable distance. This rocking stone was used by the Indians as a signal or alarm, and is known to people of the neighbourhood as Drum Rock. It is hard to find, being hidden among thick bushes, and one seeking it requires a guide.

When King Philip came through Apponaug on one of his sudden marauding expeditions, during the great Indian war, he burned every house in the place but one, and that has since been destroyed.

Several Indian burial grounds have been discovered in this vicinity. In these skeletons have been repeatedly found, always in a sitting posture, after the Narragansett mode of burial. One of these skeletons held in its bony hands a quantity of wampum, while upon each of the fingers of another was a brass ring marked with a cross.

43 "GREENE MEMORIAL" HOUSE, AT APPONAUG

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One of the sachems, whose name appears upon the earliest deed to Warwick Neck, played fast and loose with Indians and settlers in turn, coquetting with the greedy Puritans of Massachusetts, and refusing to leave his pleasant domain. He showed a warm appreciation of the white man's firewater, till at last he had sunk to the condition of a mere sot, despised by the settlers and abandoned by his own race. When Philip's war commenced this drunkard forsook his cups and re-asserted his leadership. Gathering his people once more, he led them manfully, till he fell with the remnant of Philip's brave though cruel allies.

There are later memories of Apponaug and its vicinity that are of greater interest than the tales of the red men. Among its several little graveyards are scattered the modest monuments of men who have served their country in the piping times of peace, as well as in every war from the time of King Philip to the day of Grant and Lee. Here lie the kinsmen of "Chinese Treaty" Burlingame, the fighting clan of Greene, and the tribes of Clarke and Arnold. Here are many graves decorated with flags, as evidence that the many patriotic sons of Apponaug who fell in the Civil War are not forgotten, nor their ashes neglected.

In Apponaug there is, near the intersection of the main streets, an old house that is marked with a plate that proclaims it the "Greene Memorial." It was the home of Silas Greene and the birthplace of General Francis Greene, who lived to be the senior alumnus of

West Point, and whose name is bright upon the roster of Gettysburg. Former Police Commissioner Greene of New York is also of that family, a native of Apponaug, and was born, I am told, in the old house.

Of the Greene family and others of that section of country, I shall have more to say in the chapter including East Greenwich and its neighbourhood, with which this book will close. From the pleasant highways and byways of Warwick and Apponaug, from the quietness, the quaintness, the glamour of their old associations and the beauty of their natural surroundings, one cannot but turn with deep reluctance.

Chapter III

The Ambit of the Bay

"WE can crow loud enough," the Rhode Island man says, "if we do have to go outside the State to get room to flap our wings."

A small body of land, mostly intersected by water, is Rhode Island. The windings and ramifications of Narragansett Bay form a collection of capes, estuaries, inlets, and other divisions of land and water, apparently designed to present within narrow compass an object lesson in primary geography. The State has a smaller area and a longer shore line than almost any other in the Union. It lies folded in the all-embracing arms of the sea, and smiles contentedly back at the sky, a thing of beauty to one who is fortunate enough to find an elevation from which to view it, and a joy forever to the artist or the antiquary.

When Columbus sailed westward and discovered outlying islands upon the coast of America he achieved lasting and deserved fame, though it occurs to the thoughtful to enquire whether, as Mark Twain intimated concerning the landing of the Pilgrim fathers, it would not have been a more astonishing feat to have

missed them: but to the Norsemen, Verrazani, or whoever discovered Narragansett Bay and grounded the prows of their boats on the pebbly shores of Seakonnet and Kickamuet, the world owes an unpaid debt.

"This region," wrote Verrazani, "is situated in the parallel of Rome, being 41 deg^{s} 40 minutes of north latitude, but much colder from accidental circumstances and not by nature as I shall hereafter explain to your Majesty, and confine myself at present to the description of its local situation. It looks towards the south, on which side the harbour is half a league broad: afterwards, upon entering it, the extent between the coast and the north is twelve leagues and then enlarging itself it becomes a very large bay, twenty leagues in circumference, in which are five small islands, of great fertility and beauty, covered with large and lofty trees. Among these islands any fleet, however large, might ride safely without fear of tempest or other dangers. Turning towards the south at the entrance to the harbour, on both sides, there are pleasant hills and many streams of clear water, which flow down to the sea. In the midst of the entrance there is a rock of freestone, formed by nature and very suitable for the construction of any kind of machine or bulwarks for the defence of the harbour."

This account, though sometimes questioned, seems to me clearly to point to Narragansett Bay, even without the much-discussed Verrazani map, which in fact supports it. The authenticity of both the map and the report is generally accepted by scholars, and the efforts made by several writers to discredit them have not been successful.

All of the evidence at hand clearly points to the fact that the shores and islands of this unsurpassed body of water were in past times much more densely wooded than they are at present. From the groves that remain

AN EXTENSIVE VIEW OF NARRAGANSETT BAY, AS SEEN FROM THE TOP OF MOUNT HOPE. IN THE DISTANCE, BEYOND THE DUMPLINGS, IS THE ATLANTIC OCEAN

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we may judge of the beauty of those that have been removed.

One striking error in Verrazani's report is that which pictures the bay as free from the danger of tempests, a place where fleets may ride in safety from any danger.

That it is not always placid those who live on its shores know full well. At times a persistent storm almost prohibits traffic, and those of the inhabitants who live near the water's edge are fain to batten hatches, or, what is equivalent, to secure doors and windows on the windward side of their houses, and wait for the tempest to blow itself out.

In this connection, I am tempted to quote a letter recently written by a boy of fifteen, after taking the trip from Providence to New York upon one of the Sound steamers. Here is a paragraph from his description.

"We did not get started till 6 P.M. and it looked stormy and the hurricane signals were up. When we got out beyond Newport it was *rough*, as rough as I saw it once going to Bermuda, but it was blowing harder than I have ever seen it blow before, so hard indeed that you had to hold on to something to keep from going overboard. It was so rough that every sea came as high as the saloon deck and would run along the sides. The captain did not seem to think that she could weather Point Judith, so we turned around and anchored off Dutch Island, exactly 9 P.M. Then I turned in, but was awakened about 12 by the starting of the engines. It was quite rough and even I was sick the second time we tried it. We reached New York at 12 the next day."

To sail among the islands and explore the arms and tributaries of Narragansett is as fascinating a pastime

as an inshore sailor can desire. I recall with pleasure many such little voyages, made in all sorts of weather and under all conditions of light and darkness, but with never an hour to regret. The long stretches of open water give ample sea-room for small sailboats, and the winding channels that must be picked out by chart and buoy, by range and beacon, call for the exercise of just those faculties that contribute to the keenest physical enjoyment.

One of the delightful features of the bay is its animation. Freighters, yachts, excursion steamers, vessels belonging to Uncle Sam's navy, sailboats, and launches appear and disappear around the numerous islands and capes. They pass in the narrow channels with much blowing and shrilling of whistles, for, great craft or small, they are all as careful as hidalgos about the observances of the highway—"the rules of the road." Your sailor is now about the only true conservative in the world. His vocabulary is an inheritance from Hawkins and Drake, and his punctilio would do no discredit to the court of Neptune. Even the coal barges en route for Fall River or Providence respect the rights of others or stand with assurance upon their own.

Besides the real sailors, there are numberless beachcombers and shoal-water fishermen, who wade the shallows at low water, "treading" Quahaug. They are amphibious, and are even said to be web-footed.

Narragansett is the home of the Quahaug and the Quahaugger, otherwise clamdigger. The Indians, who

appreciated the large and luscious bivalve at its proper value, would have refused to affront it with a plebeian name of only four letters. They looked at the goodly shell, tipped with purple, and saw possibilities of wampum in it; they tasted the salty morsel of marine manna with which Providence provided them each day, and

FISH NETS AND BOATS

they rolled their pious eyes to Heaven and reverently called the treasure Poquauhock. The Rhode Islander, catching the reverent spirit of the Indian, if not his exact pronunciation, adheres to Quahaug. In Connecticut men go clamming, which is a much more prosaic occupation.

The fishermen are ubiquitous. Their nets and their boats are everywhere, the former making the navigation

of many of the smaller inlets and rivers exceedingly difficult.

There are other fishermen than the "featherless bipeds" of the boats and the fish nets. Rather say there are guardian spirits, that through all this region hover in the air or dash into the water unhindered and unharmed, fearless of man, because they seem to know that the State has taken them under the protection of its laws. Uncounted fish-hawks sweep across these waters, or occupy nests that consume almost as much raw building material as the cottages of the human fishermen. Every very tall tree near the water seems to be pre-empted by these feathered aborigines, and if one is not averse to noise he may stick up a long pole with one or two cross-pieces nailed upon the top, and be pretty sure that before a season goes by there will be a structure upon it that looks like a composite of hay-rick and wood-pile.

A favourite plan for inviting the fish-hawks to build is to put an old cart wheel on top of a pole. No well-constituted bird can withstand that inducement. Sometimes an effort is made by the native Münchausen to persuade the unsophisticated stranger that these great birds carry the cart wheels to the tops of the poles themselves and fit them on. Not long ago several ladies from the neighbourhood of Boston were quoting this as a remarkable instance of intelligence in animals.

With a fair breeze the run down the bay from Cowesett to Dutch Island Harbour takes little more than an

hour if one has a good catboat or "jib and mainsail." We dodge Patience and Pojack, Calf Pasture and Despair, heading from buoy to buoy, and occasionally cutting a corner somewhat closer than strict prudence would counsel. Patience Island was the property of Roger Williams, to which he is said to have thought seriously of retiring when his dispute with Samuel Gorton was at its height. It is little more than a barren rock now, though originally well wooded. Gooseberry, Despair, Round Rock, and several other rocks are satellites of Hope Island, between which and the west shore of Prudence runs a broad, deep channel. This was once guarded by British war vessels, between which the captors of General Prescott conducted their prisoner, undetected, on their way to Warwick.

FISH-HAWK'S NEST

Coasting along the west side of Conanicut Island attention is attracted to "the park," as it is called, where well-shaded, modern cottages and green lawns suggest possibilities as yet undeveloped on most of the islands.

Between Dutch Island, a garrisoned Government post, and Conanicut, there is a good harbour. Through the western entrance a ferry runs, connecting Saunderstown, on the Narragansett shore, with Jamestown on Conanicut. The road from this ferry leads directly across Conanicut to a second one plying between Jamestown and Newport. That part of the Conanicut shore bordering upon Dutch Island harbour is rocky, almost treeless, and uncultivated, yet in that wonderful atmosphere far from unattractive. The village that straggles across the island, following the road from ferry to ferry, is well shaded and pleasant—another object lesson in tree-planting and garden-making, which perhaps will not always be lost upon the people of Rhode Island.

There are a thousand home sites, as cheap as they are desirable, waiting for tenants, though situated in one of the most salubrious climates in the world. I do not know any place where as great a result may be obtained by a little intelligent and scientific foresting as upon the islands of Narragansett Bay. Nature seems to have planned here a great sanitarium, where the clean breezes of the ocean, tempered by the great heat storage of the bay, promise immunity from half the ills to which human flesh is heir. For many years Newport has been a health resort, yet Newport has in that respect not one iota of advantage over Jamestown, or Conanicut Park, or Prudence Island. For a century and a quarter the State and the people have been blind

to the advantages of this archipelago of sunshine and salt air.

It is about an hour's sail from Dutch Island to Narragansett Pier, with the long, low coast of Conanicut to port for half the distance. When the light on Beavertail is passed, the navigator realises that he has ex-

LIGHT HOUSE ON DUTCH ISLAND

changed the sheltered waters of the bay for the unsheltered margin of the Atlantic Ocean.

The nearest neighbours on the eastern side are the Elizabeth Islands and Martha's Vineyard, and beyond them Portugal. The air is pure and strong, and the long rollers that break on the Narragansett shore have three thousand miles of water power to back them: yet I have seen the open roadstead in front of Narragansett Pier as still as a mill-pond, and, like the swans

upon St. Mary's lake, the sailboats float double, sail and shadow. Lying at anchor between the long pier and the coal wharves, when the sky behind the town is hung with purple and gold, and the lights have begun to perforate the silhouetted belt of buildings on shore, there is a long, unbroken horizon to eastward, where a ship lies between sea and sky, like a message on the lips of night.

If you like a racy adventure with a handful of work between sheet and tiller, leave Narragansett Pier in a spanking breeze and make for Newport, keeping Brenton's Reef to starboard. The Reef was the scene of many a disaster, till the light-ship, that has figured so often as a starting-point in the great yacht races, was anchored over its dangerous shoals.

Sailing into Newport we pass the famous Dumplings, that singular formation of knob-like hillocks, upon a projecting member of which a venerable round fort assumed for many years all the dignity of an important military work. At present the old defences are more picturesque than terrible, and whatever warlike suggestion this particular one may once have offered is now usurped by more modern engineering devices in the vicinity.

Beyond the Dumplings, on the opposite side of the channel, Fort Adams occupies the end of the point of land that forms the southern boundary of Newport Harbour and also encloses the little bay known as Brenton's Cove. The water-battery is a square, massive

59 THE DUMPLINGS, ON CONANICUT ISLAND

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pile of masonry, that would have been very effective in opposition to the naval armament of half a century ago, but which would crumble at the touch of an improved projectile, impelled from a modern gun.

The earth-works that crown the little hill above the battery, while they do not make as pretentious a showing from the water side, are the real defences of the harbour.

Fort Adams has stood for nearly a century, and was built during the John Adams administration, by General Totten. Fort Dumpling is a relic of the same period. Fortress Monroe was built by the French engineer, Bernard, at about the time that Totten was at work on Fort Adams.

Goat Island, lying low in the middle of the harbour, was fortified in colonial times. Colonel Romer suggested this work, during the reign of King William. There were twelve cannon in the fort on the island, in the middle of the eighteenth century, but these were removed early in 1775. The British took possession of Goat Island when they entered Newport. Fort Wolcott was constructed at a later date, under the direction of Major L'Enfant, engineer of West Point. The old fort is flanked by the quarters of officers connected with the torpedo station there. Opposite the island, close inshore, is the well-known Lime Rock, with its light house, and its association with the name of Ida Lewis, the heroine of many rescues.

The frequent islands and rocks are scattered broadcast through this part of the bay, and have each

some claim to distinction. Between them moves an apparently endless chain of vessels of every sort and size. A great group of black torpedo-boats and destroyers, belching black smoke, lie like a pack of hounds in leash, waiting for the signal to be off; near them rides a white-hulled war vessel, its bright metal

FORT ADAMS, GUARDING NEWPORT HARBOUR

gleaming in the sun; a squadron of great, sea-going yachts swim with their noses towards the tidal current, for all the world like a school of great fish, between which the smaller boats dart to and fro, in and out, like minnows. Sailboats and launches find their way amid this press with what seems like a marvellous immunity from harm, and add a touch of life to this panorama of wonderful beauty.

Coaster's Harbour Island, north of Goat Island, and Rose Island, to the westward of the channel that separates the two larger ones, have each their share of history or tradition. One of the institutions of Newport Harbour is the war college, which is not at all a college according to the ordinary acceptation of the

BISHOP'S ROCK, IN NEWPORT HARBOUR

term, but a group of buildings in which successive companies of naval officers gather, under the direction and with the authority of the Government, for mutual aid in the development of naval science. There the great war games, in which naval battles are fought on paper, according to rules evolved from the experience of many years, are played with all the seriousness that would

govern the evolutions of hostile fleets upon the ocean. Papers upon each point of naval science are read and discussed, and the latest destructive and defensive appliances studied.

The fashion, gaiety, and beauty of Newport can never be said to wane; the tide of its prosperity and popularity never ebbs; but there are times when every effect of opulence is heightened and its brilliancy becomes splendour. At such times the resources of almost incalculable wealth are drawn upon to furnish pageants that for magnificence outvie the historic efforts of imperial power. The Field of the Cloth of Gold impoverished the nobles of two kingdoms and sent many a dashing blade in the retinue of Francis I. or Henry VIII. into indigent retirement, but the paladins who meet in a modern tourney under the favourable skies of Aquidneck can support the tremendous charges of a life that is strenuous even in its frivolity and still live to blaze another day.

There is no event in the Newport calendar that quite equals in brilliancy the rendezvous of the New York Yacht Club, when its annual cruise culminates in that hospitable haven of the inordinately rich.

At any time the display of lights that at night are stationary along the wharves or upon the vessels at anchor, or dart to and fro, meteor-like, amid more stable constellations, affords a spectacle of unusual attractiveness; but when the vessels are multiplied and the lights increased a thousand-fold; when, instead of hulls that adorn the bosom of the harbour, there is a continuous

65 BEAVER-TAIL LIGHT AND BRENTON'S REEF LIGHT-SHIP

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blaze of kaleidoscopic radiance, from a countless multitude of craft, that lie so close that it seems as though the harbour had disappeared, then one sees the water side of Newport in its supreme glory.

There is something barbaric about the display. Usually twice during the cruise the yachts stop here, and each year the ingenuity of a thousand people is taxed to devise new effects in illumination, new extravagance in pageantry. The shore decorations, while wonderfully effective and even splendid, are of secondary interest compared with the spectacular display that glorifies the basin. There appears no limit, no definition, to a concourse of luminaries that suggest the ransacking of Golcondas and Kimberlys without end.

The steamboats passing to or from the upper waters of Narragansett Bay must pick their way, inch by inch, through lanes of light, between the crowded hulls that block the channel. Sometimes the glare from one of the numerous search-lights, that play like huge comets over the scene, falls upon a pilot-house, and the frantic profanity of the steamer's whistle informs the world, in no measured tones, what the pilot thinks on the subject.

Those search-lights, thrown from Government vessels or from private yachts, show here and there the outline of hulls and spars that are otherwise only defined by the tracery of innumerable jewels. Emerald and topaz, ruby and amethyst, cross and recross in unending lines, like the meshes of a flaming net. There a great yacht

rides at her anchor, ablaze with parti-coloured lights even to the water's edge; another, near at hand, carries the emerald panoply of the most gallant Challenger that ever contested for the America's cup. A little farther, and some tall schooner appears in a mantle of garnet light that ripples from stem to stern, from water-line to deck, that leaps up the shrouds and rigging like fire and bathes the spars in flame, that films the sinuous surface of the water with a conflagration. A man-of-war has draped her colours aloft, where they are illuminated; but before and beyond this and every other spectacle, for exalted sentiment, the flag over Fort Adams flies alone in the steady white beam of a search-light.

In and out of this glorious panorama of light and beauty a procession of small yachts and launches, bearing a mirthful and tumultuous company, winds in a bewildering reel that the eye wearies in following.

On the morrow—Presto! All is changed. By some touch of magic the thronging yachts are restored to their every-day appearance and are preparing to leave their moorings. The launches have been called in, daylight has taken the place of the painted night lights, and the romance and mystery of that fleet have flown with darkness.

The day, however, has brought new marvels,—the charm of trim bows, of white decks, of exquisite housings and resplendent brasses, of innumerable well-rigged men and incomparable women. The sunlight touches it all, defines the shadows of snowy sails and awnings,

sparkles upon the surface of the blue water, sharpens the outlines of masts and rigging, flashes from reflecting surfaces, glorifies even the smoke that begins to creep from a myriad funnels.

In a little while the joyous procession takes up its journey again. Past the Dumplings the yachts go, the

SANDY POINT LIGHTHOUSE

distance increasing, the mass less and less compact, beyond Whale Rock and Brenton's Reef, till at last they stretch away eastward towards Buzzard's Bay, like a flock of majestic sea-birds.

Cruising on the bay is not always an exciting pastime, though never without a peculiar charm.

One summer day I sat with four other patient people

in the cockpit of a little sloop and awaited the outcome of a race with a lobster-pot. It was off Prudence Island on the eastern coast, not far from the Sandy Point light-house. The low-lying land before us lay like a huge leviathan that had come to the surface to bask in the August sun. Few trees worthy of the name were in sight, but the undulating back of leviathan was covered with a wild tangle of bushes and vines, with here a fisherman's cabin and there a web of drying nets to give human interest to the view. On the opposite side of the channel lay Portsmouth, upon Aquidneck, a prosperous and fertile-looking country, with farm-houses, groves of trees, summer residences, boat-houses, and—a characteristic feature in Rhode Island landscape—windmills. To the north-east, the way we had come, lay Bristol Ferry, with Mount Hope beyond it and Fall River in the far distance. South we looked towards Newport and the ocean, and speculated upon the motion of a tow of coal barges that loomed large in the middle-ground. Then past the shore of Prudence, to the north-west, there was a far-away prospect of the Providence River with Bristol for the centre of the picture.

It was a rare place to be becalmed, if becalmed one must be, but when other interests flagged or became stale, attention was still active regarding the lobster-pot. The buoy that marked its location swung northward with the tide, while we were trying to go in the opposite direction, impelled by the gentlest zephyr that

ever fanned a summer sea. Little cat's-paws played on our sails and roused hopes that the lobster-pot derided. Hour after hour we tried vainly to pass that bit of painted wood and at last, to our deep chagrin, were obliged to acknowledge defeat.

Using the oars in the skiff in default of a breeze we brought the little yacht inshore and anchoring there made a landing. It is not easy to imagine the six miles of the island's almost barren surface covered with a forest of trees as luxuriant as any of those that adorn the slopes of Aquidneck or the mainland, but such we are told was once the case. When Roger Williams bought it from the Indians for himself and John Winthrop it was an attractive and desirable spot and so it remained for many years, till the War of the Revolution wrecked it, as it did many other pleasant properties. At that time it had several owners, one of them being the last Colonial Governor, Joseph Wanton, who with his brother William owned eight hundred out of its three thousand acres. This property was confiscated after the war as was other Tory property in the State. Between the departure of Wanton and the confiscation of Prudence Island under the new government, a sad change took place. During the greater part of the war the British fleet, or some part of it, lay anchored close at hand, and the maintenance of these vessels and of the troops stationed on the south end of the island necessitated the destruction of nearly all the beautiful and valuable timber to provide fuel. It was a

repetition of the devastation that made a large part of Manhattan Island practically a desert, during the same period. In New York happily the denudation was repaired by the planting of new trees and the soil of the island was preserved; but upon Prudence Island barrenness succeeded fertility and storms completed the ruin that the axes of the British commenced. It is a well-known fact that large tracts of land in various parts of the earth have been at one time covered with verdure, and subject to frequent rainfalls, where now are only arid deserts. This is the case with extensive areas upon the Danish peninsular or in Germany, or along the Danube—vast barren fields, hundreds of miles in extent, over which the rolling sand dunes shift their mammoth bulk with every storm.

Upon Prudence Island there are bare acres of rock in places where within the memory of man there was a sufficient accumulation of soil for agricultural purposes. Some time ago the owner of a farm there noticed a place, only a few feet in extent, where a violent wind had bitten into the turf, exposing the rock beneath. He ordered his overseer to put a load or two of seaweed over the spot, this being the approved method of safeguarding such spots against further enlargement. The order was for some reason neglected and the next storm tore out several acres of soil, cutting clean to the bed, and depositing a new bar near by in the bay. This will perhaps convey some idea of the way that the wind can blow when it chooses to blow in Narragansett Bay.

73 VIEW OF BRISTOL FERRY FROM PRUDENCE ISLAND

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A year or two ago the people who were out in sailing boats or steamers were mightily disturbed by the appearance of a water-spout that started on a mad and devastating career up the bay, but came to grief on one of the numerous islands.

One of the present owners of Prudence was murmuring maledictions against his possessions there, when a remonstrance ventured by the writer was met with the trenchant reply: "If you owned Prudence, you would cuss it too."

Nevertheless there are residents who not only do not condemn the island, but consider it one of the most beautiful and desirable localities near the New England coast. For outlook and climate it is certainly wonderfully favoured, and the application of a little scientific forestry would make it an Eden.

Once upon a time there was an attempt made to found a sort of principality with an independent government upon Prudence Island. In that little Utopia where theories and ideals might be put to the test without interference, one might imagine that a man of the right sort could run a problem factory to heart's content, but in the case referred to an unsympathetic and practical government declined to be a party to the accomplishment of the scheme.

Members of the Herreshoff family, of Bristol, now own about twelve hundred acres on the island, and they and others have given some attention to its cultivation; but nothing can ever restore its beauty or insure its productiveness till it is systematically reforested.

Having secured a sketch of the Bristol Ferry from an elevation near the shore, we re-embarked, to find that the wind was freshening a little and the boat was soon out of the doldrums and away from the lobster-pot. The sun was low in the west as we headed for the Ferry and all up and down the bay there was a glorious,

UPPER END OF AQUIDNECK (RHODE ISLAND)

sparkling, all-enveloping atmosphere that bathed the shore to the eastward and threw its transfiguring charm over the bare slopes of Prudence.

The light that never was on sea or land presents a vague idea that sometimes pleases the imagination; but the afternoon light, the real, abundant, vivid, prismatic light that floods sea and land alike in a summer afternoon on Narragansett Bay, is quite sufficient and satisfying for ordinary mortals.

Now, as we have nearly reached the head of the island, an interesting event repays us for the delay and weariness of the calm. A fleet of six long, black, and aggressively ugly hulls round the point ahead of us and swing off towards the Rhode Island shore. Two and two they travel, leaving a trail of smoke from multitudinous funnels, a wake of foam that contrasts with their sombre bulk, and a series of swells that sets our boat rocking as though she would tear her stick out.

Four torpedo-boats and two destroyers from the station at Newport are out for a practice cruise. They throb with the energy of engines that would propel an ocean liner and swing into position in their manœuvres with the precision of a West Point squad. Then somebody recollects that the *Dolphin*, with the Secretary of War on board, is anchored in Newport Harbour and the reason for this warlike excursion into the peaceful waters of the upper bay is explained.

Chapter IV

The Charm of Old Bristol

OLD BRISTOL, quiet now with a perpetual Sunday calm, sleeping under its elms with all the placid drowsiness of age, is a choice reminder of a day that is dead. The world knows it principally as the place where the Herreshoffs build their wonderful racing yachts, and the harbour is sometimes full of their handiwork. Travellers on the Fall River boats, if they are up early enough, look sleepily at its wharves in the grey dawn of a summer morning, and few realise that this was once the fourth largest seaport in the country. Yet there was a time when something more important to the world at large than a fleet of racing toys sailed in and out of the bay and dropped or weighed their anchors there.

Bristol has a common, in true New England fashion, and court-house, school, and church adorn it, according to the orthodox manner. Some of the houses are old and a few really ancient. Among them all, six thousand people manage to seclude themselves.

He who would live in a dream of fair houses should go to Bristol and pitch his tent there; or, better still,

occupy one of the beautiful dwellings that a former generation has left for our instruction. To leave New York City, with its magnificent adaptations, its barbaric eclecticism, and lavish display of crass newness, and go to the little town of Bristol is like exchanging the bewildering display of a department store for the simple congruities of a studio.

I believe that there is nothing in New England to equal, and nothing in America to excel, the artistic excellence of many old Bristol houses, and the number of these notable structures is so large in proportion to the size of the town that they dominate its character.

This, to a limited extent, is true of Cambridge, of Charleston, of New Orleans, but no other town of equal or approximate beauty has remained as isolated as Bristol, and consequently Bristol alone has been almost unspoiled by the miscellaneous tags and patches of modern imitation. There are to be sure New England coast villages, built and inhabited by sailors and fishermen, that possess an antique charm, but these are curious and picturesque rather than beautiful, and cannot be classed with a town where a fortunate union of taste with wealth was celebrated before the development of an abnormal appetite for architectural *pot-pourri*.

Newport can exhibit no such architectural distinction as Bristol. What is old in Newport is intensely interesting, but not as a whole so artistically important, while its newness is like the newness of every wealth-

haunted resort under the Stars and Stripes. It is like the newness of the American Metropolis, where no man has ever cared to build in harmony with his neighbour.

Two explanations are required to account for Bristol; the first will elucidate the mystery of its creation, and the second may throw light upon the hardly less mysterious fact of its preservation.

While the prosperity of Newport was greatly impaired by the War of the Revolution and quite ruined by the troubles of 1812, Bristol was during the same period enjoying her golden age. The old merchants of Newport, though they lived in a manner becoming prosperous ship-owners and traders of their day, and were housed in no mean fashion, did not compare in opulence, or in the gentle arts of extravagance, with the later princes of Bristol. More than that, while most New England towns were content with builders who dreamed of no radical departure from the familiar types that embodied convenience with simplicity, Bristol had at least one architect whose name should rank high in the annals of his profession.

Then, when the architect had done his work and the wealthy owner had seen his last ship from India seas rot at her wharf; when dollars were no longer as plentiful in the coffers as clams along shore, a gentle, appreciative fate decreed that the town should be treated like other art treasures and carefully enclosed in glass.

Few were or are the people from the outside world

81 COLT HOUSE, BRISTOL

who find their way to this isolated spot, that was once so conspicuous, so prosperously set in the tide of enterprise and success. With the loss of trade and the death of her prestige in commerce came also the loss of contact with the outer world: no longer did the roads lead to this little Rome: even the ferry that had formerly run to the north end of Aquidneck was closed. Whoever would visit Bristol must do so by way of Providence, and until lately the inconveniences attending this approach were enough to deter all but the most resolute.

These conditions, which have been frequently deplored, have really been the means of preserving the unique beauty of the place. Only once or twice they have been broken, and then for too brief a period for real harm to ensue. Nearly a generation ago James Fiske, Jr., known familiarly to the men of his day as Jim Fiske, made Bristol a terminus for his steamship line, but this is an almost forgotten episode in local history.

The name which more than any other deserves recognition for architectural triumphs achieved in Bristol, is that of Russell Warren. To his exquisite taste we owe that most enchanting of New England houses, the DeWolf-Colt mansion, the Norris house with its "amplified cupola" and "Bristol parapet rail," and a score of others, justly celebrated among architects, but unappreciated because unknown by the great public.

There, on Hope Street, diagonally opposite each

other, used to stand the Churchill and Babbitt houses, both excellent examples of the best period of American architecture. The latter, with its fine cornice, shaded by overhanging horse-chestnut trees, is built quite up to the sidewalk line, or else the sidewalk has encroached in latter years upon the base line of the house. Its proportions are ideal, and the beauty of its doorway relieves the severity of its unadorned front. Within the house the rooms are large and light, though the hallway and stair are too narrow for modern notions of comfort or convenience. The Churchill house, that was built by the famous privateering captain of that name, was distinguished by four carved American eagles, one upon each corner of the rail that surmounts the cornice. The well-proportioned cornice, or parapet rail, that seems a distinctive feature of a certain class of old Bristol dwellings, is almost the only extraneous ornamentation to be found in buildings of the type of the Babbitt and Churchill houses, the decoration of the doorways excepted. Upon the entrances were lavished all the beautiful artistic devices in embellishment that were rigorously and consistently denied to the broad face of the house, as though here the eye and the imagination are invited to rest. Here, in a charming geometric group, pilasters, fan-light, panels, and hood, with all their chaste but rich embellishment, form a focal centre.

The eagles of the Churchill house were an innovation upon the ordinary severity of that type of dwell-

ing. They are said to have been carved by sailors of the War of 1812. If true, this will fix the date of the building somewhat later than most of its fine contemporaries. Captain Churchill commanded the privateer *Yankee*, one of the most successful freebooters that ever brought home the spoil of the enemy. At the

THE GREEN AT BRISTOL, SHOWING PART OF CHURCH AND THE COURT-HOUSE

end of a single voyage the share of each common sailor is said to have been as high as a thousand dollars, and the wealth of the *Yankee's* captain was popularly computed at an enormous sum.

In the year 1803, James DeWolf, "Captain Jim" by popular brevet, erected what was for that day a palatial house, about two miles back from the village, and

surrounded by a highly cultivated park. William DeWolf, in 1808, built the mansion now known as the DeWolf-Middleton house, on Pappoosesquaw Neck. This fine old seat has an air of distinction that is largely due to its perfect proportion and simplicity of outline. The noble columns which flank the front entrance extend the full height of the house, and the portico roof shades a balcony and door upon the second story. The entrance is not so rich in detail as is that of the DeWolf-Colt house, which is a town house, intended to be effective at shorter range. The treatment of form and material in each case is exactly adapted to the situation. The first has two entrances, is placed in the centre of extensive grounds, and can be viewed from a great distance, while the latter stands within stone's throw of a village street. Above the front door of the Colt house, flanked with side lights, is a slightly flattened fan-light, surmounted by another window and still another fan-light, all with leaded panes and framed in an arrangement of Corinthian beauty. Above all is the roof of the portico, with its tall, stately, fluted columns, and bending acanthus leaves. It is a setting suggestive of the fine benignities, the dignified manners, and stately loveliness of an element that sometimes seems to have passed out of modern life. The Fales house is also upon Hope Street. It has been strongly criticised for a too florid application of Gothic ornamentation, but nevertheless is an interesting if not wholly satisfactory essay in "colonial" construction.

Older than any of these houses we have been considering is that on the corner of Hope and Union Streets, the house with the roof of simple slope, and the unsheltered little porch with four steps ascending to it upon either side. It marks a quieter taste, a less extravagant time, before the magnates of Bristol began to roll in wealth and dream of princely establishments.

How the wealth was made has often been whispered in tones of reprobation by reformers and philanthropists of a later day. There are more than hints of cargoes of rum exchanged for cargoes of black people, of privateers that were well described by the French appellation, "Corsair"; of bales and barrels that brought a stain of blood to the piled-up wharves and glutted warehouses.

There was other trade as well, ventures in the far-off Indies and bargains made with the crafty Mongolian by the craftier New Englander. Then it was that the merchants wore broadcloth and the dames arrayed themselves in richest silks, and ivory and gold were commoner than bone and pinchbeck. Then sandalwood boxes and jars of Canton enamel, and curious carved work, along with a thousand other interesting matters, found their way into the old houses, where many of them still remain.

James DeWolf, to whom I lately referred as having built a lordly mansion two miles from the town, was the master spirit in Bristol during the days of his prosperity. Not only were his ships on every sea and his

enterprises discussed by every fireside, but he was also a political leader of strength and ability. We read in one place that "James DeWolf successfully opposed the motion to declare Richard Jackson Jr. Governor, in 1806." In 1811 a bill to enfranchise all tax-payers and those who had served in the militia passed the Senate with two dissenting voices, but was opposed in the House by the Federalists. It was warmly supported by James DeWolf of Bristol. In 1819 he was elected Speaker of the House of Representatives, and two years later resigned to take his seat in the United States Senate.

Whether the prosperity of Bristol increased measurably during the third decade of the nineteenth century it is difficult to determine. We find in 1822 a proposition to increase its representation in the Assembly, and an adjourned meeting of Assembly held, and Courts established there in 1824 and 1825; but this is conclusive of nothing except mere population, and that we find to have been stated in the census of 1820 at 3197.

We have been looking at what may be called mediæval Bristol, the period of great prosperity, following the rupture of the colonies with Great Britain. But the history of this unique town did not commence then, nor was that its first taste of wealth. Indeed the DeWolf era, as it has been called, must be taken to represent the renaissance of Bristol. Long before that there was wealth and an aristocracy here; the place ranked among the important seaports of America: its wharves were

89 WHERE THE CUP DEFENDERS ARE BUILT. THE HERRESHOFF WORKS AT BRISTOL

scenes of activity and its stores overflowed with merchandise. It was a market to which many vessels came, a port of entry, and a place of resort for the rich.

We have glanced at some of the beautiful examples of the architectural art of Warren and his contemporaries; but we can trace upon many of the older streets the evidences of an earlier taste not to be despised. There are many familiar features of colonial design in carved lintels, Corinthian columns, leaded side lights, and other delectable adornments. Everywhere is the evidence of a prosperous past, when comfortable householders had sufficient leisure to enjoy the finer side of life. The furnishings of many notable old houses bear out this impression, suggested by their exteriors. They are repositories for substantial heirlooms. Not infrequently the things in common use to-day are the same that were here before Wallace bombarded the town in 1775.

Some of the older dwellings are scattered at intervals along what used to be the water front, their doors facing the street, while the grounds at the rear used to extend to the water; but many of the oldest ones, that were evidently the residences of well-to-do people, are upon side streets, and have so far fallen from grace that they have become the tenements of foreigners employed in the rubber works.

Consulting the chart of the bay we trace the contour of Bristol Neck and the natural line of distribution

from this point to other centres of population, and are puzzled to account for the former activity and importance of the little city. Its present rural quiet seems so much more compatable with its geographical position. It is almost as far from the land—that is, the inhabited land of consumers—as it is from the ocean. A seaport, according to all experience and reason, should not only be in a position to receive and discharge upon the seaward side, but also to distribute and collect upon the landward side. To this latter use Bristol does not seem well adapted, nor can we imagine that with a smaller and more scattered population throughout New England the condition could have been more favourable.

It is necessary to search the records and enquire of tradition for the explanation that the chart withholds. Bristol was in its earlier days not at all one with the Providence experiment of Roger Williams, nor the Newport democracy of Coddington and his companions, nor the Warwick Protest of Samuel Gorton. On the contrary, it was a part of Massachusetts Colony, an offshoot from Plymouth, belonging to that Bristol County that is still, beyond the farther shore of the bay, a part of the older commonwealth. The Mount Hope lands that were incorporated into the township of Bristol included the south portion of the Neck and the peninsular of Papasquash or Pappoosesquaw. Four original proprietors received the deed of conveyance for this tract in 1680. Josiah Winslow was Governor of Massa-

chusetts and Charles II. King of England at that time. The four original proprietors of Bristol were John Walley, Nathl. Oliver, Nathl. Byfield, and Stephen Burton, all Boston men. The deed was signed Sep. 14th (O. S.), 24th (N. S.). Afterwards the town of Bristol was included in the territory confirmed to Rhode Island by the Royal commissioners in 1741, along with Cumberland, Warren, Tiverton, and Little Compton; in all about 122 square miles. Warren was finally included in Bristol County.

Long before its conveyance to Rhode Island, the more successful and well-to-do merchants of Plymouth made this pleasant point in the land-locked waters of Narragansett Bay their summer home, building at first slight structures, but replacing many of these in time with more substantial dwellings, as one family after another from transient visitors became permanent residents.

Narragansett Bay afforded a safer harbour than that of Plymouth, and its approaches were much easier, so that finally the little branch colony became a side door, and a very important side door, to the commerce of Massachusetts. While from Bristol it is a long way around by shore to the mainland of Massachusetts, it is but a short run across by boat to any landing-place from Tiverton to Fall River, and consequently more convenient for the majority of producers or consumers in Massachussets than either Plymouth or Boston.

Among the Plymouth men who in their day became

the magnates of Bristol was Judge Hubbard, a notable man in Massachusetts, whose family afterwards spread into Connecticut, and in time became connected with every one of note in the Nutmeg State. The home of the Hubbards in Bristol was upon that delightful neck of land that the old inhabitants still call Papasquash and modern etymologists style Pappoosesquaw. Presently the reader will be given an opportunity to decide for himself this vexed question in orthography.

At first upon the peninsular a number of small settlers, perhaps from Providence—squatters who found the point a convenient fishing ground,—put up their cabins and lived in the primitive fashion of frontiersmen. Nathaniel Byfield bought up most of these small holdings, creating thereby a handsome estate, which he afterwards sold in several plantations. This Nathaniel Byfield held various offices and appointments under the Crown, among others that of Farmer of the Excise for Rhode Island. There is a memorial building erected to him in Bristol, not far from St. Michael's Church. The Point Pleasant farm, purchased by Judge Hubbard, was part of Byfield's estate, and its subsequent history has a peculiar interest as it touches the lines of several of Rhode Island's most prominent citizens.

Old Judge Hubbard had ten children, and one of these, Margaret, married one William Vassel, who in time became proprietor of the Point Pleasant farm. He was, to use the language of an old Bristol resident, a man of parts. Cultured, agreeable in manners, rich,

a man of affairs, he seems to have won for himself an enviable place in the esteem of his neighbours. He was the son of a wealthy Jamaican planter, and inherited in that island estates which gave him an income that was considerable for that time.

Bristol was by that time no longer a part of Massachusetts. The change in colonial affiliation had occurred

PAPPOOSESQUAW NECK

in 1747 and now the dark days of the Revolution were approaching. It was not enough in times when men staked their fortunes upon their political opinions, that one should be possessed of wealth, or should be pleasant and neighbourly. The day arrived when it became necessary for every citizen to choose which side he would espouse ; whether he would stand with the Crown or the colonies.

It might be written of William Vassel as it was of another pleasant gentleman eighteen centuries earlier: "He was very sorrowful, for he was rich." To decide for the colonies meant to give up his Jamaica estates; to choose the side of the Crown would be the abandonment of his Point Pleasant farm and other Bristol interests. Vassel thought that he might escape a decision by moving away. The demand that he should come out openly in support of the new cause was answered by flight. When the war was over he tried to explain that he had been neutral, and even addressed a moving letter to Simeon Potter, then the most prominent citizen of Bristol, praying that he would use his influence with the commissioners to prevent the forfeiture of Point Pleasant; but Simeon would not present the case, justly arguing that to be neutral at such a crisis was to side with the enemy.

So Vassel's delightful estate was sold under forfeiture, and the purchaser was John Brown of Providence, the man who had called the meeting that resulted in the burning of the *Gaspee*, the most widely known shipowner and merchant of the city of Roger Williams, the citizen whose name will ever be honoured with that of his nephew in connection with Rhode Island's excellent university.

When Vassel, the popular and prosperous neighbour, decided that he would take no part in the impending struggle with the mother country, his more decided acquaintances experienced a revulsion of feeling re-

specting him and treated him to a violent demonstration, in the course of which his carriage was stoned and he was obliged to flee for his life. He escaped to Nantucket and shortly afterwards to England, where he finally settled.

It was this same William Vassel who built what has been known as the Cragie house, afterwards occupied by Longfellow, at Cambridge.

From the year 1782 the family of John Brown used their Bristol farm for a summer home, as the people from Plymouth had done long before. Every winter they returned to the fine old mansion in Providence, which several generations of grandchildren regarded as the home of the family gods and traditions. John Brown was the treasurer of the Rhode Island College and one of its founders, though its name was changed to Brown University in compliment to his nephew Nicholas, the son of Nicholas, who was its liberal benefactor.

At the old house on Pappoosesquaw the visitor is shown a window upon which is inscribed a sentence scrawled long ago in an idle hour by one of the notable sons of Massachusetts. Harrison Gray Otis while visiting at the old house took a diamond ring belonging to one of John Brown's daughters and wrote her name, "The adorable Abbey Brown," and there the complimentary record stands to this day. That same Abbey Brown married and became the mother of a boy who in time was elected to the chief office in the State,

as Governor Francis. Abbey Brown was married in her father's Providence house before it was quite completed. That house passed to the descendants of John Brown and was sold by them about the year 1852. Sarah, another of the daughters of John Brown, married, in 1801, a German gentleman named Frederick Herreshoff. About two years after their marriage, the young couple commenced housekeeping in the old Point Pleasant house, where they brought up five children. The present generation of the Herreshoff family consists of the famous boat-builders, with several sisters and their brother Lewis, to whom I am indebted for a number of the facts given in this chapter. They all were born and reared on the old Point Pleasant farm. One cannot but think of the list of those who have owned it; Byfield, Hubbard, Vassel, Brown, Herreshoff —among them all not one obscure name.

It is time to redeem a promise made in an earlier part of this chapter and present for the reader's edification a choice in etymology. Papasquash, known as such by old residents and so spelled upon old maps, is as we know a peninsula forming part of the town of Bristol. When King Philip, chief sachem of the Wampanoags, was making his heroic last stand at Mount Hope, he is said to have sent all of the squaws and pappooses belonging to his band to the safer, because more remote, retreat upon the point. This is a tradition that has long been cherished in the neighbourhood and out of it has grown a corrected spelling.

There are those who feel that the derivation of Pappoosesquaw from Papasquash is by no means convincing, any more than would be the deduction of Muskquash, the Indian word for muskrat, from musk and squaw; but certainly it is not a matter over which to be vehement. The name Pappoosesquaw was in use, though how general I cannot say, about fifty years ago.

In speaking of the ancient commerce of Bristol I have referred especially to that with China and the East Indies, but there was also a very large West Indian trade. From the islands, where the merchants found a ready market for slaves, they brought large quantities of sugar, rum, and molasses, together with tobacco, which seems to have become almost as important an article of trade as it is to-day.

I have written in another place of Simeon Potter, at one time the most important citizen of Bristol, who is thought to have lent a hand in the *Gaspee* affair, and was certainly in great danger of punishment for treason. Admiral Montagu was enraged over the burning of the schooner *Gaspee*, near Pawtuxet, and was urging the Governor and Assembly of Rhode Island to strenuous efforts to discover the participants in that affair, when a negro—whose testimony is held in serious doubt—alleged that he had gone to the scene of the schooner's destruction in a boat with Simeon Potter, and that the latter was one of the ringleaders of the expedition. The Admiral's low estimate of the privateer was based on this report. Simeon's father was the redoubtable

sailor and privateer, Hopestill Potter, whose exploits in the West Indies and on the South American coast were household tales a century ago. With him, as clerk of one of his vessels, there came to Bristol a young man named Marc Anthony DeWolf, who may be briefly designated as the father of all the DeWolfs. He fell in love with Captain Potter's daughter and pressed his suit successfully. In the punning phrase of a Bristol man, she early made her mark, and is the honoured ancestress of half Bristol. In the political troubles of 1750–1756, during the administration of Governor Hopkins, Bristol, for commercial reasons, adhered to Providence, her leading men being many of them interested in business enterprises there. In resisting the stamp act the men of Boston, Philadelphia, and New York won the instant sympathy of the men of Bristol, and in 1774, anticipating the action of nearly all the cities and towns in the colonies, a Bristol meeting passed resolutions advocating independence.

In the War for Independence Bristol did not play a prominent part directly, though her sons were many of them engaged in different parts of the country in the Continental army, and her ships added to the strength of the new American navy. She was not, however, free from annoyance and even invasion. In the fall of 1775, a British fleet anchored in Bristol harbour, and the place was bombarded by Wallace. This was at the time of the evacuation of Newport by the Americans, when the Tories took charge of the town, though the

British did not arrive in force till December, 1776, remaining after that till nearly the close of the war.

Wallace's fleet arrived on October 7th, after having annoyed and harassed the Americans both on land and water, interfering with commerce and paralysing business. Wallace demanded that four magistrates of Bristol be sent off to him, probably intending to retain them as hostages while he made what terms he chose with the town. There was, naturally, a great deal of excitement, but the people had no idea of sacrificing their magistrates in any such way, and their refusal to comply was as prompt as Wallace's order had been peremptory.

Upon receiving the reply the fleet opened fire, bombarding Bristol for four hours, during which time several houses and churches were injured or destroyed, but fortunately no human lives were lost, save one who was afterwards reported to have been found dead, and he was surmised to have died from fright. After levying from the inhabitants a contribution of forty sheep, Wallace sailed away. It was reported that a number of small articles disappeared at that time, among others a pair of woman's silver shoe-buckles. There seems to have been some skirmishing between the shore people and the fleet. We read that Colonel Barton, a native of Warren, was in Providence at the time of the attack, but made all haste to return to the rescue of the endangered towns and harassed the enemy, but was himself wounded in the skull while sitting on horseback.

A year later, while Continental troops occupied Bristol and Tiverton, upon the arrival of the British in force at Newport fortifications were erected on both sides of Bristol ferry to keep open communication on the American side, and interfere with the advance of British ships into Mount Hope Bay and the upper end of the Saconnet River.

In May, 1778, a force of the enemy landed on Bristol ground at a point between Pappoosesquaw and Warren. Dividing into two parties they marched respectively to Warren and the Kickamuet, which is a tributary of Mount Hope Bay, and about three miles across land to the north-east from Bristol town. The still water of Kickamuet makes it an especially desirable harbour for boats of moderate draught, and there General Spencer had collected a number of flat-bottomed scows, to be used for transports and other service against the British in the bay. Besides these were the row-galley *Spitfire* and some other craft. To this point one section of the British party directed its way and proceeded to destroy the boats, setting fire to nearly all of them, and doing great damage. The attack was both rapid and unexpected, and the Americans were unable to gather a force large enough to repel the invaders.

Passing the "Ferry," which is the narrowest part of the channel between the end of Bristol Neck and the island of Rhode Island, the navigator traces the possible course of Leif the Lucky, Son of Eric the Red, who with his hardy Norse followers may have entered

103 THE NARROWS, AT THE MOUTH OF THE KICKAMUET RIVER

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Mount Hope Bay, in the year one thousand and one. We cannot disprove it, and Professor Rafn says that this is the place of their landing and encampment.

Only a few years ago, a mere generation at most, it was the fashion to believe every legend that was sufficiently romantic. Our fathers believed in the Norse origin of the round tower at Newport, of which more will be found in the proper place, and they saw no reason to dispute the dictum of the Stockholm antiquaries who would land Leif upon the shore of Mount Hope Bay. This is a branch of Narragansett Bay, with an opening into the Saconnet River, or Channel, and is the eastern boundary of Bristol Neck, which is about two miles in breadth. The bay from Hopeworth and the Soldiers Home to Fall River, is about four miles in width, a broad, shallow basin, fed by four little rivers, of which Taunton is the largest; the Kickamuet, nearest to the Bristol shore, has already been referred to.

At the very entrance to the bay, coming up from the Ferry, the most prominent object in the landscape is an attractive hill, that in a flat country takes upon itself all the dignity and importance of a mountain. Like a veritable mountain it offers a view of wide extent and varied interest. All values are relative, and the lofty crest of Mount Hope would be hardly more than a respectable mound in the Hudson Highlands, and might sink to the level of a depression in a more mountainous region. To tell the truth, it is only two hundred feet above sea level; but that is pre-eminence in its

neighbourhood. Fifteen miles or more to the south, along the length of the Saconnet River, the eye travels past points and bays, to where a distant sail looms upon the rim of the Atlantic; or, shifting ever so little to the west, where the waters of Narragansett shimmer and glow in the sunlight, distant Newport displays a long low belt of violet, dotted with indistinct microscopic hillocks, each one of which is the costly home of some unusually prosperous human ant. Equally distant, in an opposite direction, is Providence, overhung with a smoky cloud and at night canopied with the corona of its own lights. Four miles distant from Hope, across the bay, is Fall River. There is a place behind it from which the moon rises.

Almost a third of the State of Rhode Island is exhibited, as upon a chart, but a chart of marvellous contour and colour, from this delightful little eminence.

Whether or not Hope was the "Hop" of the Norwegian saga, the hill has an authentic claim to historic consideration, for it was here that that hero and genius in a red skin, even King Philip, chief of the Wampanoags, made his headquarters during those dark days when he was striving to unite the Indians in a common assault upon the growing power of the whites.

107 A DISTANT VIEW OF MOUNT HOPE, FROM THE WEST SHORE OF MOUNT HOPE BAY

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Chapter V

From the Top of Pocanoket

AMONG the many celebrated characters who have filled the pages of colonial history, none has a more valid claim to recognition than Philip of Pokanoket. Other Indian leaders were called chief, sachem, or sagamore, but to this red man alone even his enemies accorded the title of all other titles in their estimation the most exalted. King Philip's name was heard with pride or fear wherever red or white men roamed the forests, or built their stockades in the clearings, from the Saco to the Roanoke.

Metacomet, his people called him: he was the son of that powerful and friendly Sachem, Massasoit, to whom the white settlers owed so much. It is perhaps not an overestimate of the value of his protection that at one time the very existence of the Massachusetts colony depended upon it. The old Sachem never wavered in his honest loyalty to those English friends, and happily died in ignorance of their folly and ingratitute.

Hardly had the good Massasoit passed away when his eldest son, Alexander, was seized upon a suspicion for which history fails to show any foundation, and, his

heart being broken by the indignity he suffered, he fell immediately into a fever. Upon being released he died before reaching his own lodge.

To Alexander succeeded Philip, or Matacomet, the young son of Massasoit, who forgot the peaceful precepts of his father in the desire for revenge engendered by his brother's death.

There is a very singular and striking series of facts connected with the Indian wars that form such a dreadful chapter in New England record. Massachusetts was very sparsely populated by red men at the time of the Plymouth and other settlements. An epidemic, fearful in its ravages, had swept away all but a remnant of the tribes in that part of the country. To the westward, on the contrary, there were strong tribes of active and warlike savages, and the shores of Narragansett Bay in particular were the home of a large population.

When Roger Williams and many another of the best men among the Massachusetts colonists were driven out to perish in the wilderness, they were forced to leave a land where there were comparatively few Indians and go into a region teeming with them. To their policy and to the friendliness of Massasoit and other chiefs is due their survival. In connection with the foregoing facts we must notice another, bearing a close relationship to them. The Indian wars that so greatly troubled the Massachusetts colonists did not generally involve the settlers upon Narragansett Bay, and except upon rare occasions they were not in any

PHILIP'S ROCK

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serious danger from the savages, though they lived in the very midst of the hostile tribes.

Here we return to King Philip and his brief but brilliant history. Pokanoket, his royal residence, was that same delightful hill that we of to-day know as Mount Hope. Bristol and its vicinity was the tribal home of the Wampanoags, whose alliance with other powerful peoples extended to the south and west. The Narragansetts were their allies, and many a sachem or chieftainess of some sub-tribe along the shores of the bay claimed kinship with the Wampanoag king.

Philip is credited with having conceived a plan which was imperial in its scope. He would not be satisfied to harass a handful of settlers here or there, or to wreak vengeance upon a few individuals, while the power of his enemies continued to increase and retribution was sure to follow any inadequate act of aggression. He aimed, it is supposed, at nothing less than a concert of all the tribes upon the Atlantic seaboard, north and south, and contemplated a war so sweeping in its effect that not a white man should be left alive in all the land.

If this idea occurred to King Philip, it is evidence of his knowledge of the coast and its inhabitants for at least a thousand miles, though journeys at that day were invariably accomplished either on foot or in frail canoes, and geographical data was by no means easy to obtain. To have both conceived his great plan of confederation and endeavoured to carry it out stamps Philip among the remarkable leaders of his time.

But the great machine that was to annihilate the white settlers was not yet in working order, its parts not assembled, when, through the treachery of one of Philip's own tribesmen, the English learned what was going on, and wisely struck the first blow, before their adversary could make further preparation.

The man who told of his chief's plots was a hanger-on at the white settlement, a convert to Calvinism, and possibly also to the flesh-pots that in later days made New England kitchens famous. Sausaman, the informer, was soon afterwards found dead in a pond, upon which the ice had evidently been broken when his body was thrown in. An inquest disclosed the fact that he had been murdered, and a motive being discovered in his betrayal of Philip's plan,—which was then seriously recalled for the first time,—three Indians were apprehended and condemned.

In the pages of Mather's *Magnalia Christi*, which is a treasury of supernaturalia, the reverend author gravely states as a fact that whenever the foremost of the murderers, who was a friend and counsellor of Philip's, approached the corse of the slain man, it would commence to bleed afresh. Upon such evidence as this the King's friends were put to death.

The fate of Miantonimo was too recent to be forgotten; the chief knew that even acquittal in the courts of his enemies would not save his life if he should fall into their hands; he therefore at once prepared to meet the conflict that was as inevitable as it was premature.

For years the most widely read accounts of King Philip's war were drawn from the narrative of one of the most bigoted and superstitious of his foes, who, having got his material at second hand, from partisans opposed to the Indian chieftain, thought it no shame to exploit his own narrowness and credulity. To him the Indian hero was a devil from the nethermost pit, and his splendid patriotism no more to be condoned than the traditional excursions of the "roaring lion" of Holy Writ.

Unsupported by a majority of those chieftains whom he had hoped to draw into his alliance, Philip could offer no adequate resistance to a foe as rugged and as resolute as his own devoted followers, and vastly better armed. His chief supporter was Canonchet, head of the Narragansetts, to whose chieftainship the young warrior had been elevated when his great father, Miantonimo, was slain; yet even this sachem, with a great burden of wrongs to revenge, refused to take an active part in the war at first, but received Philip's broken forces after a defeat, and gave them such substantial aid that the anger of the English was aroused against him and he was included in the vengeance they had determined to mete out to the Wampanoag chief.

Before Canonchet had declared for him, Philip's name had already become one of terror to the white people of Massachusetts, to whom he seemed ubiquitous. His strongholds were in impenetrable forest morasses, where the English dared not follow the light

feet of the Indian. On bridges and causeways of roots his followers made their way through reeking bogs, and again and again found some unsuspected way of escape when hemmed in by their foes. With dreadful celerity Philip contrived to strike blow after blow at points so distant from each other that a suspicion of witchcraft began to attend his flight.

It was upon Pocasset Neck in Barnstable, surrounded by the waters of Buzzard's Bay, that the English finally congratulated themselves that they had cornered Philip. This was the home of a tribe ruled over by Philip's kinswoman, Weetamoe, who afterwards died in his cause. The Neck was not suited for a battle-ground for the white men, but they deemed it an excellent starving ground for a company of bottled-up savages, so they built a fort where the Neck leaves the mainland, and sat down to wait. While they waited, the beleaguered Indians made rafts, and leaving all behind but able warriors, they escaped on these flimsy vessels and succeeded in making land. Then it was that Canonchet showed his quality by giving them shelter and aid and answering to the English demand for their surrender that not a nail-paring of a Wampanoag would be given up by him.

The fate of the Princess Weetamoe may be briefly told here, belonging as it does in part to the stories of Mount Hope Bay. When Philip was near the end of his career, that brave and faithful woman, driven in retreat before the English with the remnant of her

WOODLAND BORDER OF THE SWAMP WHERE KING PHILIP FELL

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TO: MAIN

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footing of ice upon the treacherous face of the swamp, a renegade Indian guided a large force of settlers to the retreat. The Sagamores and their followers were taken by surprise, and, though they fought fiercely, were forced to retreat. Having driven them away the English kindled a fire that not only destroyed wigwams and storehouses with the goods and the provisions of the foe, but consumed also the women and the babes. That such an outrage should have been committed, even in the heat of battle, by white men of any nationality, was bad enough, but that it was chronicled with

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people, came to one of the numerous rivers or inlets and attempted to swim to the other shore. Exhausted by her previous exertions and possibly starving as well, but with no dream of surrender, she fought her last battle, alone, with the overwhelming waves.

It is probable that Weetamoe, sustained by her courage, succeeded in reaching the shore she sought, but in such a weak condition that she could not rally. Her body was found, naked, a short distance from the shore, and her barbarous foes severed the head, and, carrying it to Taunton, set it upon a pole, where it was recognised and bewailed "with most horrid and diabolical lamentations" by her captive tribesmen.

Down in the Narragansett country, Philip and Canonchet together made a stronghold and storehouse upon an island in a great swamp, several miles in extent and unattainable, it was thought, by any white man. But hidden by a December snow-storm and finding a solid footing of ice upon the treacherous face of the swamp, a renegade Indian guided a large force of settlers to the retreat. The Sagamores and their followers were taken by surprise, and, though they fought fiercely, were forced to retreat. Having driven them away the English kindled a fire that not only destroyed wigwams and storehouses with the goods and the provisions of the foe, but consumed also the women and the babes. That such an outrage should have been committed, even in the heat of battle, by white men of any nationality, was bad enough, but that it was chronicled with

evident satisfaction by so-called historians of that day, is too horrible to comprehend.

After having been driven from the Narragansett country the two chiefs were hunted from one fastness to another. Canonchet was the first to meet his death. Having found a strong rallying place in Connecticut, and gathering around him a considerable force from neighbouring tribes, the Narragansett chief set out with a few companions to forage for corn in the neighbourhood of Mount Hope. Surprised by his enemies, and unable to elude them, his gun rendered useless by falling into a stream as he was crossing, he was finally captured. His life was offered to him on condition of allegiance, and the offer was refused with a dignity worthy of a king. He was condemned to death, and was shot by three young sachems.

Philip, now alone, saw his followers dispersed, his adherents diminishing in numbers. His wife and child were slain, his allies either captured or faithless, his cause lost. One by one the things that had made life sweet were stripped from him. He came back by stealth to his own home, Pocanoket—Mount Hope. What a desolate mockery that superb view must have seemed to him as he lay among the white, bare rocks and looked out over the wind-swept junipers to the familiar haunts. There was the Saconnet channel, sparkling in the sunlight, but upon its whole expanse not one canoe manned by a friend of his. There were the fair lands of Canonchet—his brother in arms, the

defeated and slain Canonchet. There he could trace, near at hand, the site of his own lately crowding wigwams and see as on a map the place of his corn-fields, all marked by ashes and ruin.

His people, his kinsmen, his family, where were they? He looked about him and looked upon the pitiful survivors of all that brave race, and his heart

MOUNT HOPE BAY, LOOKING TOWARD TIVERTON

was like stone. Over there, across the water, was a camp of the English. He would strike one last blow.

A follower, tired of the hopeless struggle, came near him and began to speak. The fugitive king heard the words, "submit, surrender." He rose and slew the man. Then the brother of the one that Philip had killed slunk away and ran to the English camp and betrayed his chief, for revenge. The Sagamore was driven from his ancient fortress into a swamp near at

hand, and here at last he was slain by a treacherous member of his own race.

There used to be a tradition not many years ago that the ghost of the unconquered warrior was sometimes seen, on moonlit nights, but particularly before a storm, springing from foothold to foothold through the marsh. That retreat still preserves its wild and tangled character, presenting an aspect of mysterious gloom. There are even now unaccountable wailings in the woods, and strange indefinable whisperings on the hilltop, and the shadows reveal moving gleams of dusky light that flit from place to place. I have sought the shade of the old Indian king and fostered a superstitious hope that haply I might sometime encounter him; perhaps it is as well that I have not succeeded, for even in life he is credited with having had a fine hair-raising propensity.

The spot where Philip made his last reconnaissance and that other place, where he was treacherously slain, have each been marked with inscriptions engraved upon boulders faced for the purpose. As long as grass grows and waters run, it will matter little who holds the title deeds to hill or swamp, the imagination will people the region with its ancient proprietors, and history will confirm the claim of him "who holds in mortmain still his old estate."

One of the institutions of Bristol is the State Soldiers Home. About two miles from the village and occupying a delightful situation overlooking Mount Hope Bay are

the large and handsome buildings in which the indigent and crippled, or superannuated heroes who have served in the Rhode Island contingent of the National army, find a refuge. Central among the buildings is a round tower of red brick, crowned with a conical cap and mantled half-way up with a splendid green kirtle of ivy. It affords a fine colour contrast and fortunately can be seen from a distance. The discipline of the home is not severe, just enough to secure regularity in meals and other functions, yet sufficiently lax to suit the individual peculiarities of a few score elderly men. The necessaries of life, including good and wholesome fare and clothing, are provided by the State, but luxuries must be purchased out of each man's private means, and this leads to various ingenious ways of making pin-money. Sometimes a veteran who is handy with a penknife and glue-pot, puts in part of his time in the manufacture of dainty doll's furniture or other small souvenirs, evolving these ingenious toys from discarded cigar-boxes. The campers and picnickers that frequent the near-by shore leave many things that become sources of income to the old soldiers. Bottles are collected, and, having a market value, are usually converted into tobacco. Sometimes the veterans pick fruit or perform other light work for people in the vicinity, and when the wild blackberries ripen they open for awhile a thriving industry. Clam digging is an occupation that never seems to flag, and fishing has its votaries.

Everywhere along shore you meet them, the quiet,

kindly, unhurrying old men. The bustle of life is over for them; they dream no dreams of wealth or influence or fame; they have no need to consider the ant, who toils for his daily bread; theirs is provided. It is a strange community, from which all the large anxieties and the large incentives have been eliminated, and the members know that on this side of the grave there is nothing more to expect either of good or evil fortune.

I have spoken of the parties who visit the shore for picnic purposes. Bristol Neck is a famous locality for clam bakes, and at every convenient rocky cove, particularly near Mount Hope, the little cairns of stone, blackened by fire and enclosing beds of charred seaweed, tell the story of a culinary pilgrimage.

The shore cannot be closed to the wayfarer. According to Rhode Island law every foot of the devious coast line that encloses tide water affords a public right-of-way, which no owner of adjacent property can refuse to recognise. One familiar illustration of the working of this wise law is the Cliff Walk at Newport, which passes through the magnificent grounds of the most exclusive property owners, who have made a virtue of necessity, and in most instances groom the walk to make it correspond with its park-like surroundings.

On the south-eastern end of Mount Hope Bay, where the channel of the Saconnet enters it, the quiet town of Tiverton reposes. Quiet—yet not by any means inert, for it has its own little fleet of vessels and a very respectable trade, for which its situation is admirably

125 TAUNTON RIVER, BETWEEN TAUNTON AND DIGHTON

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adapted. Tiverton evidently rejoices that it is alive, for every August there is a celebration which includes speeches, coloured fire-rockets, a parade and much music, to keep green the memory of the day when the place was founded. On three separate occasions, in three distinct Augusts, I have seen the lights and the fireworks, and have been informed that Tiverton was glorying in its foundation, so that it seems reasonable to infer that the custom has grown to be habitual.

A town that can display such honest pride in its own existence is certainly worth a visit—unless the wind chances to be in the quarter that will bring down the odours of an adjacent fish factory, than which nothing more unsavoury has been imagined on earth since the sea birds removed the remains of the last leviathan. Leaving the fish factory aside, as we may do if the breeze blows away from us, Tiverton is doubly interesting because of its geographical position and its history. It was originally known by the Indian name of Pocasset, and celebrated for many years as the scene of the great swamp fight in Philip's War. There it was, being encompassed by his enemies, that the Indian King withdrew as though by magic with all his force, leaving the Englishmen to guard an empty morass.

In 1746 Tiverton, along with Bristol, Little Compton, Warren, and Cumberland were, by the enforcement of the royal decree concerning the eastern boundary of Rhode Island, brought within the jurisdiction of that colony, and incorporated.

Tiverton was garrisoned by the American army during the British occupancy of Newport, and the battle of Tiverton Heights, as it was called, occurred upon the 29th of August 1778. When the French finally took possession of Newport, the Tiverton barracks were assigned to them for hospital uses, as was also a farm in Bristol.

Among the notable men whose names are associated with Tiverton's history perhaps the most prominent is that of Joseph Wanton, one of the most successful shipbuilders in the colony, from whose yard were launched many of the famous merchantmen and privateers of the old times. He was a Quaker and noted not only for his patriotic interest in public affairs, but also for his private hospitality. It is said that he literally kept open house for whoever came hungry or destitute to his gate, as well as for such as might claim social equality with him.

Joseph Wanton and his wife were both public speakers of the Society of Friends, and his eloquence is said to have been extraordinary. He was the oldest son of Edward Wanton the first, and followed his father's calling. Two of his brothers were Governors of the Colony, and in time his son Gideon filled the same office. His nephew and namesake, Joseph Wanton, second, was the last Tory Governor of Rhode Island, and his lands were confiscated when the independence of the States was won.

Along the eastern border of the bay, part in Rhode

129 FALL RIVER, WITH SPARROW ISLAND IN THE FOREGROUND, FROM HOPEWORTH SHORE

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Island and part in Massachusetts, stretches the busy, hustling, bustling, hard-working town of Fall River. If ever there was a large concrete denial of a hoary adage, it is here. The bells ring and the whistles blow by scores at an early hour in the morning, and the major part of the large population commences work; when the labours of the day are over, the bread-winning thousands are glad to rest. Early both in rising and retiring, no one has ever yet accused the average Fall River mill-hand with being wealthy, or healthy, or over-wise.

Everyone knows Fall River. The great Sound steamers that collect and distribute passengers en route between Boston and New York would be sufficient to celebrate it, if it had no other interests. But Fall River is one of the world's famous manufacturing towns, and the great majority of its population are mill-hands. Neither its private dwellings nor, except in some few cases, its public buildings, nor its places of amusement, nor its hotels suggest a city with large pretensions to intellectual or social culture, though as a business centre it has few rivals among towns of its size in the world. The comparatively meagre evidences of ideals familiar to Cambridge or Princeton, that one may find upon the outskirts of Fall River, seem rather to accentuate its general depression of tone.

It is from a distance that it becomes a thing of beauty. By day the smoke hangs heavy over its chimneys, that are so thick as to suggest the idea that every

building has shouldered an inordinately long musket and is staggering with it to a general rendezvous. When the sunrise is behind those chimneys in the early morning—which is the time for the arrival of the boat from New York—they are transformed, and again, when the level afternoon rays strike those huge piles of brick and masonry, they put on a wonderful beauty. Shade after shade of red or of russet melts into misty violet shadows and the sunlight is flung back in splendour from ten thousand windows. The bay takes up the scheme and elaborates and extends it into a dazzling fugue of light and colour. Then, when the sun goes down and one by one the chimneys are blotted out by the shadows, the clusters and constellations of electric lights appear and again the complacent bosom of the water resumes its auxiliary task, and with a thousand fantastic loopings of serpentine brilliancy completes the picture.

To really appreciate Fall River one should never approach nearer than the opposite side of Mount Hope Bay. From Mount Hope itself the city is a spectacle for the gods.

A careful study of guide-books or maps made during the first three or four decades of the nineteenth century will fail to discover Fall River. The explanation is that at that time the town, then a mere hamlet, was masquerading under another name. As part of Freetown it came over from the eighteenth century, and in 1803 was incorporated separately, though it was several

years before its population reached twelve hundred souls. Then and until 1834 it was called Troy, but finally the name was changed back to that by which the village had been originally known. In 1854 the city charter was obtained, although at that time the inhabitants did not number more than fourteen thousand. Now the population is upwards of one hundred thousand, and the capital invested in cotton mills, spindles, looms, etc., above thirty million dollars. There are a great many vessels belonging to Fall River, which, by the way, is a port of entry. The name is derived from a stream which must formerly have been very beautiful, dashing in a succession of cataracts from Watuppa Lake and in half a mile accomplishing a descent of one hundred and forty feet. The Fall River water-works, established at a cost of a million and a half dollars, are upon this lake, which is nearly ten miles long. The city of Fall River covers an area of about thirty square miles.

Of all the tributaries of Mount Hope Bay, none is better worth exploring than the Taunton River, and, though we are trespassing upon Massachusetts territory and outside of our own preserve of Narragansett, yet a brief excursion may be forgiven. For about fifteen miles the Taunton is navigable, though in many places hardly broader than the Bronx at its lower end. In many of its features it reminds one of an English river, though the shores are not so well groomed and the verdure is American. The banks are abloom in late

summer with golden-rod, queen's lace and Jo-Pye weed, with jewel weed, early asters and cardinal flowers, and the middle grounds of meadow and woods are brightened with sumach, pepperidge and maple.

Every turn of the little river presents a surprise, a picture to treasure always in the house of memory. The farmhouses near the shore are delightfully old-fashioned, nearly always trim and comfortable in appearance, and generally glorified by a setting of noble trees, among which elms predominate.

The temptation is strong to linger at the towns that appear at intervals. Who can ever forget the first glimpse of the three white spires of Somerset, rising from a little mosaic of roofs and tree tops and suggesting to the mind of the poet and the bosom of the river delightful, if conventional, reflections.

At Dighton there is a pictured rock, or rather an inscribed rock, that was known and noted by the first or second generation of Englishmen in America and has been the puzzle of archæologists ever since. Of course its untranslated inscription has been ascribed to the Norsemen, and equally of course, no follower of Eric or Leif has ever come back to deny the authorship; but a sceptic age refuses too serious a credence to the idea that lines cut by an idle sailor upon an exposed rock-face, near tide water, would stand the weathering of a thousand American winters.

One of the excitements of navigation on the Taunton is the chance of meeting the coal barges that loom like

leviathans upon the little stream, suggesting a whale in a trout brook. About two miles below Taunton there is a noticeable fragrance of balsam in the air and presently one is aware of the neighbourhood of pine woods, a bit of the forest primeval, that still holds its place amid the shifting scene.

Even at Taunton the tide is still felt, the water still brackish. The shores are Massachusetts shores, but the water upon which we have been voyaging is Narragansett water, though somewhat adulterated by an alien stream.

AT THE ENTRANCE OF MOUNT HOPE BAY. STARTING POINT OF KING PHILIP'S FORAYS INTO MASSACHUSETTS

Chapter VI

Sea Rovers from the Bay

THE men who settled the shores of Narragansett Bay were many of them descendants of the early mariners of England, the men of old Plymouth and the western ports, who manned the privateer ships that, under Drake and Hawkins, formed the sturdiest bulwark of Elizabeth's throne.

Active, persistent, impatient of control, the sons of sires who had ravaged the fleets of Spain and singed the beard of her king, found it impossible to conform to the rules made by the iron-bound theocrats of Massachusetts Bay. We have seen how with creditable dispatch most of them insured their own banishment by various and vigorous protests against the existing order of things. With a fine amphibious instinct they laid the foundations of a State that is about one-third tide water.

From these men sprang many of the boldest captains that have ever commanded American vessels. In the old colonial wars they were the legalised freebooters that hunted the seas for war craft or merchantmen, and in the early days of the Republic they were still foremost in maritime service.

In default of a navy the defence of the American colonies, in time of war, depended almost entirely upon privateers, fitted out by private enterprise, at the risk of individual owners; who were reimbursed, if at all, by booty captured from the enemy.

The Government, royal or colonial, granted letters of "marque and reprisal" to these adventurers, but was not otherwise responsible either for their expenses, their conduct, or their fate.

A tenth of the proceeds of a successful expedition was usually returned to the Government, which thus became sharer in the profits, though not in the risks, of the game. In the employment of such knights errant of the high-seas, the colonies did but follow the example of the Mother Country and of Europe.

From the conditions of their life, the men of Narragansett Bay became as expert navigators as any in the world. From every harbour and bay their ships put out to sea, and their lives were lived almost as much upon the ocean as on the land. That waste of stormy water was their highway to the homeland they had left and to the neighbouring settlements upon the coast. It brought them intelligence of the world that had become too crowded for them and furnished them with the greater part of their living. It was a friendly and familiar presence compared with the dark, unknown forests that, on the other hand, hemmed in the narrow territory they occupied on the margin of a continent.

To men so bred the transition from the peaceful

occupations of fishing and trading to the life of roving commerce-destroyers was not a difficult one. Their energy found scope in enterprises that satisfied equally their patriotism and their desire for gain. Their deeds sometimes rose to heights of disinterested heroism, or descended to the level of legalised piracy.

When a Rhode Island privateer returned to Newport or Providence from a successful cruise, he was honoured by his fellow colonists as a hero, but when a Frenchman of the same trade fell into their hands he was apt to suffer the penalty for piracy. Thus it happened that Peter Legrand, Peter Jesseau, and Francis Bondeau were hanged at Newport, in 1738, and various other "corsairs" suffered the same fate at different times.

The Narragansett privateersmen did not confine their activities to home waters. Wherever the keel of an enemy's merchantman moved in distant seas, there might the lookout expect to discover the white wings of some swift bird of prey from the land of Roger Williams.

"The mildest-mannered man that ever scuttled ship or cut a throat" might have found his prototype on board of a Rhode Island privateer, or one from the Bay colony, commanded by a Presbyterian elder or a Quaker legislator, and manned by crews that had been nourished on the shorter catechism and who handled their sheets to the accompaniment of a "chanty" from the Psalms of David.

Their nets were cast for fish of all varieties. A plate ship, bowling home from the Spanish main, a slaver bringing its sorry passengers from the Congo coast, or a merchantman freighted with the handicraft of the weavers and smiths of France, were alike welcome to the devout freebooters.

It was a profession to tempt the ambition of restless youth, and its prizes were not infrequently greater than could be won in any other. As an example of what a successful privateersman might achieve, the shining career of Sir Charles Wager may be indicated, as one of the most successful in this irregular branch of the service. He was an orphan, brought up in Rhode Island as the adopted son of John Hull, and after an adventurous life won pre-eminent rank in the British navy, where he became the ready and powerful champion of the Rhode Island sea rovers. While sailing in a privateer commanded by his adopted father, Wager, by a brilliant exploit, attracted the attention of some British officers, and one of them strongly advised the boy to enter the regular service. This he did, advancing through all the grades, till finally he became First Lord of the Admiralty. He was in power during the days of Walpole's ministry, and was the advocate of the Rhode Islanders in many of their disputes with the Crown or with their neighbours.

To this distinguished seaman some have attributed the custom, now common, of distributing among the crew of a victorious vessel the prize money gained from

the foe. But we may question whether the privateers of earlier days and other countries did not offer Jacky this incentive to a strenuous life. To the men who divided the spoils of Spanish warships in recent years, the genesis of prize-sharing may be of interest.

Sir Charles Wager was by no means the only Rhode Islander who won distinction in the regular service of his Government after an apprenticeship in the ranks of the privateers. Commodore Abraham Whipple was another of those who were promoted from private to public maritime service. He was a shining example of American pluck and seamanship combined. In one cruise, in the years 1759–60, he is said to have captured twenty-three French prizes, and the value of the British vessels that struck to his superior skill and energy during the Revolution has been calculated at over one million dollars.

The name of William Jones, who was afterwards Governor of Rhode Island, appears as one of the officers of the frigate, *Providence*. This vessel was built, it is said, in the incredibly short time of seventeen days (actual working time), and mounted twenty-eight guns. Her commander was Abraham Whipple, to whom reference has been made above. For some time the sailing of the *Providence* and her sister ship, the *Warren*, was delayed, owing to the presence of British ships of war in Narragansett Bay. But at length, being ordered to bear some dispatches to France, Captain Whipple took advantage of a dark, stormy night, and slipped away.

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COMMODORE ABRAHAM WHIPPLE
FROM A WATER-COLOUR IN THE COLLECTION OF THE RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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He went stealthily, showing no lights, and enforcing silence on board the frigate, till, when near Prudence Island, he became aware of the proximity of a British warship. Unable to resist the pressing temptation, he poured a broadside into her at close range and kept on his course, leaving his adversary to recover from her surprise at her leisure. The *Providence* got safe away, and in due time William Jones, Captain of Marines, went ashore at Brest, in France, with the dispatches.

One Captain Jones, said to be John Paul, commanding the *Alfred*, of the Continental navy, finding it difficult to procure the number of men he needed when ordered to sail, solved the problem by impressing twenty-four men from the *Eagle*, then near the mouth of the bay.

Privateering dated back to the very early days of the Colony, before organisation had brought order to the scattered communities near the Bay, and while Providence was still a seething hot-bed of faction. In 1649 Roger Williams wrote to John Winthrop about a prize captured by Captain Clarke, "which the Dutch contend had been taken in violation of the treaty between England and Spain." The frigate in which Clarke sailed was afterwards purchased by a Frenchman, named Bluefield, who tried to get authority to go to the West Indies, but was prevented from leaving, "lest his vessel should be employed against American commerce." In 1652 the Providence Colony was authorised to commission privateers to serve against the ships of the Low

Countries. Previous to that date four ships had been commissioned for similar service, and one of them was commanded by William Dyer. It was not unusual for men who were at least nominally Quakers to take part in such irregular warfare. One of the strangest contrasts that the records of colonial life present is to be found in the history of the Wanton family, nearly all Quakers and descendants of one whose faith had caused his banishment from the Massachusetts settlements. They were men of standing, merchants and ship-masters, as well as legislators; a virile race, to whom leadership on land or water seems to have come by nature.

The first of the Wantons of whom we know anything definitely, was a soldier of the Massachusetts colony, who stood near Mary Dyer when she was executed and who afterwards dated his conversion to the tenets of the Friends from that day. After the execution of Mary Dyer, Edward Wanton never again bore arms, and his remonstrance against warlike enterprises on the part of his sons is said to have been earnest: but while he deprecated their fighting, he took pains to assure them that he would be much more displeased if they should prove themselves cowards. It is said of one of these sons, William, that he fell in love with a Presbyterian maid of Scituate, but that the match was displeasing to the parents on both sides, because of their religious differences. At last William resolved to end the difficulty by one bold stroke. Entering the home of his lady-love, he said—while the family sat about in

consternation—" Ruth, we are made for each other and cannot live apart. Let us settle this matter. Do thou give up the Presbyterians and I will cut the Quakers, and we will join the Episcopalians and go to the devil together." This they agreed to do, though their after-lives do not show that they lived up to the suggestion of the last clause of William's proposition.

Another story told of William Wanton was that years afterwards, when filling the office of Governor, he appeared (in a scarlet coat lined with blue) at a Quaker wedding, and spoke eloquently on the subject of marriage.

John Wanton, the brother of William, also filled the gubernatorial chair in Rhode Island, as did several other members of that distinguished family. These two were among the leading privateers during Queen Anne's war, near the middle of the Eighteenth century. They were both Quakers, for in spite of William's agreement to go to the Episcopal Church and the devil, he returned to his father's faith.

When the French commerce-destroyers were ravaging the shores of Narragansett Bay, the Wantons resolved to put an end to such practices. The fact that they had at their command no armed vessel to cope with their adversaries made no difference to their resolution. With a small unarmed schooner and about thirty reckless or devoted young men hidden under hatches, the brothers set sail to capture the largest privateer ever seen, up to that time, upon the New England

coast. The schooner might well put one in mind of a Quaker David advancing to meet the French Goliath, with an armament as foolish as that of the Shepherd Lad of Israel.

Coming in sight of the Frenchman, the schooner made a feint of retreating, but was soon brought to by a shot that the privateer sent skipping across her bows. Submissive to the orders of the big adversary, the harmless-looking little vessel came meekly up, but instead of hauling alongside, fell somewhat clumsily under the privateer's stern. It was the work of a very few minutes for the brothers to marshal their concealed forces and clamber on deck. The moment of surprise and disillusion came for the foreigner when, instead of three or four sleepy traders, thirty or forty fighting Baptists and Quakers stood upon his deck, each one armed with gun or cutlass, and every one of them sublimely unconscious of anything absurd in demanding the surrender of a force that must have outnumbered them three to one. The fight was short. Having overpowered those on deck, the Wantons and their men coolly shot down every Frenchman who showed his head above hatches and the enemy soon surrendered. Great was the rejoicing in Newport when this important prize was brought in, and the young men were the lions of the day.

Another exploit of these daring Friends was the capture of a privateersman whom they had followed into one of the harbours either on Martha's Vineyard or the mainland, and approached under cover of a thick fog.

In this case William Wanton in a small boat came close under the stern of his foe and drove wedges between her rudder and stern-post, so that she became unmanageable. While in this situation the inferior boat of the Wantons approached in such a direction as to be out of the range of the French privateer's guns and soon compelled her to surrender.

One Joseph Wanton, said to have been a Quaker preacher, and probably the same who was afterwards Lieutenant-Governor of Rhode Island, made a statement that is still preserved and which gives a singular picture of the life of a Friend of the Eighteenth century.

"I Joseph Wanton, being one of the people called quakers, and conscientiously scrupulous about taking an oath, upon solemn affirmation say that on the 1st day of the month commonly called April, A.D. 1758, I sailed from Newport in the snow, King of Prussia, with a cargo of 124 hogsheads of rum, 20 barrels of rum, and other cargo. That on the 20th day of the month called May, I made Cape Mount on the west coast of Africa; that I ran down the coast and traded until I arrived at Annamibo, where, while at anchor, on the 23rd day of the month called July, when I had on board 54 slaves, 20 ounces of gold dust and 65 hogsheads of rum, I was taken by a French privateer of 60 guns, fitted out at Bordeaux, called Le Compte de Ste Florentine, having on board between 500 and 600 men, while my vessel had but three small pieces and 11 men."

This is a curious showing for a man of peace who had conscientious scruples against taking an oath. Rum-selling and slave-trading were, as I have pointed out, both countenanced by the Rhode Island colonists generally, and Wanton did no more in this direction than the majority of his neighbours. The history of any age

must be read by the light of its own standards and not by the illumination of ours.

The long list of privateers known to have sailed from Rhode Island ports during the various wars antedating the struggle for American independence, as well as during that time of national birth, show that this little State played no mean part in the defence of the American coasts.

When, during the Spanish-French War, the Connecticut levies were to be transported to the tropics, the *Tartar*, a well-equipped vessel of great speed, was sent, under command of Capt. Daniel Fones, to act as convoy. Fones had no idea of acting the part of the gentle shepherd and being content with frightening away the wolves that sought to harass his flock. Upon falling in with a French brigantine, he ruffled his feathers and went eagerly into a fight that soon resulted in adding the Frenchman to his fleet. Next a rich India ship, named the *Heron*, hove in sight and Fones swooped down upon her with a great spread of canvas and a bristling array of guns. This vessel also became a prize, and the Rhode Islander with his convoy bowled merrily along towards Carthagena, or whatever port had been designated in his orders.

However, the game was not to be all one way. Shortly after the affair of the *Heron* had been satisfactorily settled, another sail pierced the horizon, and it soon appeared that a great French frigate, far too heavy in armament and tonnage for the *Tartar*, was likely to make havoc among the merchantmen.

Then Captain Fones adopted the tactics that a mother-quail uses when her young are endangered and she flutters away as though with a broken wing, till she has lured the hunter from her helpless brood. Hovering near the Frenchman, the *Tartar* tempted him to give chase, and then led him, always seemingly on the eve of capture, but always deceived, over miles of ocean, till the game was successfully played and the Yankee vessel skimmed away like a sea bird, leaving her pursuer probably wiser as well as sadder.

Fones at another time led a little fleet, of which the *Tartar* was flagship, against a force of French and Indians that were making ready to cross the Bay of Fundy to attack Sir William Pepperill, then advancing to the siege of Louisburgh. A flotilla consisting of several schooners and sloops, and a large number of canoes, was met and defeated by the Rhode Islanders with a promptness and thoroughness that aided materially toward the reduction of the French stronghold. Fones was finally lost in a cold winter storm, during which the privateer *Prince Frederick*, which he then commanded, was wrecked upon Block Island. His life was one of adventure and daring to its very close.

Another noted privateer who suffered shipwreck finally was Peter Marshall, who was disabled in a blow off Hatteras about the middle of the Eighteenth century.

During King William's war an engagement was fought off Newport (in 1690) between two Rhode Island privateers and several large vessels of the enemy. It

must have been a sight for which the Newport "cottagers," of this more peaceable day, would willingly exchange an annual trial of speed between modern racing sloops or even a chance bombardment in the course of fleet manœuvres, when a war game is in progress. Captains Godfrey and Paine, who commanded the American

CAPTAIN FONES'S SCHOONER "TARTAR" LURING THE FRENCH FRIGATE AWAY FROM THE MERCHANTMEN

vessels, finally brought their adversaries in triumph into the harbour, and no doubt strutted on shore afterwards with all the pomp and circumstance of conquering heroes. The sea rover of that day did not leave his warlike insignia on his vessel and come ashore like any modest citizen. It would be the way of the Nineteenth or Twentieth centuries to sink an enemy's ships and

scatter his forces broadcast on the face of the waters, and then stroll along the cliff or take a turn on Lenox Avenue as though such things were not worth mentioning. The Eighteenth or Seventeenth century hero was a simpler being. He strutted, and wore a sword dangling at his heels and an arsenal of flintlock pistols in his belt, and curled his moustaches fiercely. He had not the least objection in the world to being told to his face that he was a hero.

We have spoken of the close resemblance between some of the privateers and the pirates and buccaneers that infested the Southern waters. Captain Dennis was one of those who hung close to the border line. He took many prizes and defeated a score of the vessels of the French, and strange stories are told of his high-handed proceedings. Upon one occasion, in company with a New York privateer, he captured a French vessel that had on board a number of colonists—or, as they were called "creoles"—people who were not of negro or other inferior race. Bringing these unfortunates home Dennis sold them as slaves; and more is the wonder that in New England and New York he seems to have found a ready market for such questionable chattels. But retribution soon followed, for a number of Americans being seized by the French, they were threatened with a similar fate, till an exchange had been made. The creoles had been scattered and it was necessary to hunt them out and repurchase them before they could be restored.

In the light of such a record it seems hardly credible that the people of Providence or Newport should have stretched hemp for "pirates," yet there were several occasions upon which freebooters were hanged. On Broad Street, in Providence, to this day is shown a little grey house that has not been occupied for many a long year because of the haunting presence of the ghost of a pirate who was hung from a tree near by.

It would not be possible even to record the names of a tenth of the number of those who in times past have carried letters of marque from Narragansett Bay, and have harried the ships of France and Spain and England on the high-seas, but we cannot omit to mention Captain Read, of the Revolutionary time, who after many adventures was captured by one Crandall and imprisoned in the *Jersey* prison ship, in the Wallabout Basin. In company with another prisoner Read managed to escape, by a daring dash, from under the very eyes and fire of their British keepers, and succeeded in regaining Rhode Island, where our captain was soon engaged again in his accustomed work. Meeting Crandall not long afterwards, he gave battle and finally, after a hot conflict, succeeded in boarding the latter's vessel. To his great grief and chagrin when he reached the deck his enemy lay dead.

Simeon Potter of Bristol, sometimes celebrated as a privateer, was a man of great force and of a somewhat contradictory character. He seems to have been at once generous and unforgiving, kind and vindictive, a

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rigid religionist and yet cruel in his demand for the ultimate eye or tooth in his dealings with his fellowmen. One of his contemporaries, Admiral Montagu, of the British Navy, named him every thing that was base, a pirate among other things, but this it must be remembered was the opinion of one to whom no good could appear in Rhode Island.

Nearly thirty years ago, in the *Overland Monthly*, was published the translation of a letter supposed to have been written by a French priest of the Society of Jesus in the year 1744. This epistle, which seems to bear internal evidence of its authenticity, describes with minute care the marauding expedition of one Captain Simeon Potter, of "Rodelan," in which foray Fort d'Oyapoc was captured and the village around it looted and destroyed. Fort d'Oyapoc, be it said, was a French fort upon one of the islands to the west of Cayenne and "not far from Surinam." It was a miserable little settlement and not worth looting, if we are to believe the account of the priest; but poor and inconspicuous as it was, Captain Potter made it the scene of one of the reprisals so usual in the warfare of that day.

Guided by Indians, the Rhode Island privateer surprised and attacked the fort under cover of the night and was himself the only one on either side to be wounded in the encounter. The Frenchmen, with the sole exception of the priest and one negro slave, fled to the woods. The former, thinking that his offices might be needed by some of his flock, and imagining that he

might to some degree save or protect the sacred vessels and furnishings of the church, stayed at his post and was captured by the privateers, whom he has described with some minuteness. Captain Potter is spoken of as a young man, about thirty years of age, who kept sober—in marked contrast to most of his companions—and who evinced a more serious and thoughful mind, even going to the extent of expressing his regret that the depredations against which the Jesuit protested could not be checked, or the men restrained.

"The first one who approached me," says Father Fauque, "was the captain himself. He was a man small in stature and not in any respect differing from the others in dress. He had his left arm in a sling, a sabre in his right hand, and two pistols in his belt. He told me that I was very welcome, that I had nothing to fear as no one would attempt my life." Again he says: "The captain, more susceptible of feeling than the others, told me that he would willingly yield to me what he was able to return but that he had no control over the will of the others."

After holding this poor priest for a while a prisoner on board of the privateer's vessel, where he had the pain of seeing the plunder of his church and dwelling brought, while a marauding party under one of the lieutenants went upon an expedition to burn and pillage elsewhere, he was permitted to go ashore, ostensibly to gratify his desire to save papers and other property, but really, he explains, with the object of watching him

to discover the location of treasure which his captors were convinced he had hidden. This naïve writer's description of Rhode Island—which he calls Rodelan—and the Rhode Islanders was set down from impressions gathered from the privateers and is a laughably close burlesque upon the original.

> They [the privateers] were like a band of monkeys or of savages, who had never been away from the depths of the forest. A parasol or mirror, the smallest articles of furniture a little showy, excited their admiration. This did not surprise me when I learned that they had scarcely any communication with Europe, and that Rodelan was a kind of little republic, which did not pay any tribute to the King of England, which elected its own governor every year and which had not even any silver money, but only notes for daily commerce. This is the impression I gained from all they told me.

Captain Potter continued his depredations, and, according to this narrative, pillage and fire followed his progress. Arriving near Cayenne, several of his prisoners still on board, he sent ashore his boatswain "an energetic man, bold and determined," in a long-boat with nine men, to make a diversion which might prevent the French at Cayenne from sending relief to Machuria, to which place another party had been despatched.

"When I first learned the departure of the long-boat," says Father Fauque, "I could not doubt but that the Lord wished to relieve me from my captivity, persuaded as I was that if the first party was not attacked the second would be." This event, so earnestly desired

by the priest, actually took place, for soon after commencing their work of pillage the boatswain and his crew were attacked by a force of Frenchmen, who succeeded, after killing three of the ten, in making the remainder prisoners. Not knowing the fate of his people, Captain Potter was on the look-out from his vessel when he discerned several boats, full of men, setting out in the direction of Machuria. He expressed a belief that not only were these people French soldiers going to the relief of that place, but that the boatswain and his men had been captured.

It would seem that that officer, whose instructions had been only to reconnoitre, had been pushed by his zeal to make a landing, contrary to the expectation or wish of the commander. Subsequently the priest was exchanged for the captured crew of the long-boat.

An interesting glimpse of the equipment and armament of a privateer of that day is given in the following words: "He was thoroughly armed as a privateer—sabres, pistols, guns, lances, grenades, balls filled with bitumen and sulphur, grape shot—nothing was wanting . . . they placed two swivel guns in the windows besides the twelve that were on deck along the sides of the ship."

Various other captures were made in the course of this expedition and it is little wonder that the reverend chronicler should use in referring to Captain Potter and his vessel the word *corsair*, which may be translated either privateer or pirate as one's inclination

leads. Through all the account here referred to the Captain is pictured as superior to his crew, both in his sobriety and humanity, and quite unable to control them in many of the details of their destructive work.

The tales of the old sea rovers of Narragansett are without end; every family has its traditions of deeds of daring, and hairbreadth escapes. I have selected for this chapter a few of the more typical stories, illustrating the independence, the fertility in resource, the courage and love of adventure that were characteristic of the Rhode Island settlers, and were more fully developed by the conditions of their mode of life.

Chapter VII

The "Gaspee" Affair and Others

IT is quite as important for a country to have a historian as to have a history, if aught that it has done or suffered is to serve in the way of warning or encouragement for posterity. The Puritan settlements in Massachusetts are notable examples of the advantage of possessing both the story and the story teller. From the days of Cotton Mather to those of Emerson, a ready pen has always been at the service of the Bay State commonwealth, to record every happening, and if the pen has sometimes extenuated and perhaps, once in a way, has set down something in malice, the main point has been achieved in celebrating local patriotism or the strange procession of local events.

In marked contrast to the genius that has exploited the greatness of Massachusetts has been the silence that has brooded over the affairs of other colonies and states, her neighbours. New York and New Jersey along with Connecticut, were almost persuaded of their intrinsic inferiority, standing very much in the position of sturdy but silent boys in the presence of an over-praised brother who chances to be the family marvel. It counted no-

thing to the city that has its feet on Manhattan Island and its arms all over the world, that it had its own tea parties and other deeds of resistance to the hated Stamp Act; that it fought its fight and suffered its pain and wrought out its magnificent destiny as well as another. To what end was it all done — lacking a scribe?

As for little Rhode Island, her manifest destiny was to do things, not to talk or write about them. She had acquired a taste for independence that by the time the struggle with England was imminent had become a controlling habit. Rhode Island did not cast off the British yoke — she simply refused to put it on; she denied ever having worn it. The strenuous efforts made from time to time by the British Government to replenish its depleted exchequer by the imposition or collection of duties on American commerce, were not less earnest than the efforts of Rhode Island merchants and shipmasters to avoid paying tribute. To put a stop to what was stigmatised as illegal trading, armed vessels were sent to assist the revenue officers in the discharge of their duties.

Among the first of these vessels was the schooner *St. John*, commanded by Lieutenant Hill. She arrived in 1764 and was immediately regarded as an enemy to the commerce of the Colony and her every movement watched with jealous eyes. Among other unpopular proceedings Hill followed to sea a brig that was said to have discharged a cargo at Howland's Ferry without

observing the formality of declaring it or paying duties, and captured her, bringing her in triumph to Newport. The people of the Colony, exasperated by this and other high-handed proceedings, fitted a schooner to attack the *St. John*, but were at the last moment prevented from carrying out their purpose by the arrival of a British war-ship in Newport Harbour. Balked of

THE WARWICK SHORE ACROSS COWESETT BAY

their revenge, the crowd proceeded to Goat Island, where they seized the fort and turned and fired the guns upon the man-of-war. This seems to have been the first act of actual resistance to British pretensions in any of the American colonies and is an important incident of the pre-revolutionary story.

Other war-ships became more or less embroiled with the Rhode Islanders, and the trouble increased as they

persisted in impressing seamen from Rhode Island merchantmen. A brig, just arrived at home after a long voyage, expected eagerly by those who had relatives and friends among her crew and, we must not doubt, bringing hearts quite as eager for the home coming, was stopped when in sight of land by the English war vessel *Maidstone*, and her entire crew impressed. In retaliation about five hundred men of Newport seized one of the *Maidstone's* boats, dragged it through the streets of the town and burned it on the common in front of the court house, while a crowd, composed of the major part of the inhabitants of Newport, witnessed and applauded the deed. During the proceeding there was no attempt at interference on the part of the authorities.

Captain Reid, of the sloop *Liberty*, annoyed the merchants and made himself generally unpopular among the Rhode Islanders, by endeavouring to enforce obnoxious revenue laws. He was an officer of the King's navy and his vessel was regularly commissioned to assist the customs officers in Rhode Island, but in carrying out his instructions it is more than probable that he was more strenuous than discreet or conciliatory. A captain named Packwood, having suffered at the hands of Captain Reid, visited the *Liberty* for the purpose of expostulating, but was roughly handled, his boat was fired upon and his life endangered. Enraged at this brutal performance, to which it is doubtful if Reid was personally a party, the people of Newport

went *en masse* on board the *Liberty*, cut her cables and allowed her to drift ashore on Goat Island, where she was finally burned.

Not satisfied with the punishment meted to the *St. John*, the *Maidstone*, and the *Liberty*, the English Government persisted in antagonising the liberty-loving Rhode Islanders by renewed efforts to enforce the revenue laws. The *Gaspee*, a schooner of eight guns, with Lieutenant Dudingston in command, arrived in Narragansett Bay in the spring of 1772 to carry on the work for which the *St. John* and the *Liberty* had proved ineffectual. Dudingston was quite as high-handed as Reid and soon incurred the enmity of the people as his predecessors had done. The position of a revenue officer in that colony was not unlike that of a factor in Ireland at a later date.

It would seem from correspondence afterwards exchanged between Governor Wanton and the Earl of Hillsborough, that the commander of the *Gaspee* did not take the trouble to acquaint the former with the arrival of his vessel, her mission, or his authority, till the Governor had by several letters demanded such information. Governor Wanton further complained of illegal seizures and oppressions on the part of Lieutenant Dudingston.

Darius Sessions, the Deputy Governor of Rhode Island, wrote to Governor Joseph Wanton at Newport, a letter dated from Providence on the 21st of March, 1772, as follows:

GOVERNOR JOSEPH WANTON

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SIR; The inhabitants of this town have of late been much disquieted in their minds by repeated advices being brought of a schooner which for some time past hath cruised in the Narragansett Bay and much disturbed our navigation. She suffers no vessel to pass, not even packet boats, or others of an inferior kind, without a strict examination, and where any sort of unwillingness is discovered they are compelled to submit by an armed force. Who he is and by what authority he assumes such a conduct it is thought needs some inquiry and I am requested by a number of gentlemen of this town on their behalf to acquaint your Honor therewith, and that you would take the matter into consideration and if the commander of that schooner has not as yet made proper application and been duly authorised in his proceedings, that some proper measures be taken to bring him to account. It is suspected that he hath no legal authority to justify his conduct, and his commission, if he has any, is some antiquated paper, more of a fiction than anything else, and this seems to be confirmed by Mr. Thomas Greene who says he saw it and believes it to be no other than the commission the famous Reid had; who lost his sloop at Newport, or something else of no validity. In consequence of the above mentioned application I have consulted with the Chief Justice thereon, who is of opinion that no commander of any vessel has any right to use any authority in the body of the colony without previously applying to the Governor and showing his warrant for so doing, and also being sworn to a due exercise of his office, and this he informs me has been the common custom in this colony.

I am Sir
With the Greatest Respect Your Honor's most Obdt and Humble Servt

DARIUS SESSIONS.

GOV. WANTON.

The brief correspondence which took place between Governor Wanton on the one hand and Lieutenant Dudingston, commander of the *Gaspee*, upon the other, showed how essentially different were the view points of the two men. Wanton's just claim that an officer of the Navy, professing to have instructions to assist the

revenue officers in their work, should show his commission to the Governor of the Colony was treated with something very like contempt. Soon this correspondence was submitted by Dudingston to his superior, Admiral Montagu, and elicited from him an outrageous epistle to the Governor, bristling with offensive criticisms and personal reflections. The Admiral evidently did not comprehend the status of a colony living under such a charter, and electing its Governor in a manner quite democratic. Montagu's ridiculous assumption of a right to lecture and advise a man of Wanton's position and character drew forth from that gentleman a dignified though trenchant reply, and the correspondence on both sides was then submitted to the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

It is interesting to note an Englishman's opinion of the character of the man who was put in command of the British squadron in American waters at this critical time, when only the most consumate diplomacy might have prevented an open rupture between the Mother Country and the Colonies. I quote from Trevelyan's *American Revolution:*

> Sandwich, who had succeeded Hawke at the admiralty (1771) had appointed an officer with his own surname, and (as it is superfluous to state) of his own party, to command the powerful squadron now stationed in American waters. Admiral Montagu, who came fresh from hearing the inner mind of the Bedfords, as expressed in the confidence of the punch-bowl, was always ready to make known his opinion of New England and its inhabitants in epithets which, on a well ordered man-of-war, were seldom heard abaft the mast. In comparison with him (so it was said) an American free-

holder, living in a log house twenty feet square, was a well bred and polite man. . . . The navy, like every profession, has its bad bargains, and the Lieutenant in command of the schooner *Gaspee*, which was watching the coast of Rhode Island, set himself to translating the language used on the quarter-deck of the flagship into overt acts. He treated the farmers on the island much as the Saracens of the middle ages treated the coast population of Italy. . . . The injured parties made their voices heard and the case was laid before the admiral, who approved the conduct of his subordinate officer, and announced that, as sure as any people from Newport should attempt to rescue a vessel, he would hang them as pirates.

The *Gaspee* was finally dealt with by the exasperated inhabitants of Rhode Island, and the spirited narrative of that affair in the language of one of the actors in it is well worth reading.

Col. Ephraim Bowen wrote as follows:

In the year 1772 the British Government had stationed at Newport, Rhode Island, a sloop of war, with her tender, a schooner, called the *Gaspee* . . . for the purpose of preventing the clandestine landing of articles subject to the payment of duty. . . . On the 10th day of June 1772, Captain Thomas Lindsay left Newport in his packet from Providence, about noon, with the wind at the north, and soon after the *Gaspee* was under sail in pursuit of Lindsay and continued the chase as far as Namquit Point, which runs off from the farm at Warwick, about seven miles below Providence. . . . Lindsay was standing easterly with the tide on ebb about two hours, when he hove about, at the end of Namquit Point and stood to the westward; and Dudingston in close chase, changed his course and ran on the point, near its end and grounded.

Lindsay continued his course up the river and arrived at Providence about sunset, where he immediately informed Mr. John Brown, one of our first and most respected merchants, of the situation of the *Gaspee*. He immediately concluded that she would remain immovable until after midnight and that now an opportunity offered of putting an end to the trouble and vexation she daily caused.

Mr. Brown immediately resolved upon her destruction and he forthwith directed one of his trusty shipmasters to collect eight of the largest boats in the harbour, with five oars to each, to have the oars and rowlocks well muffled to prevent noise, and to place them at Fenno's wharf, nearly opposite the dwelling of Mr. James Sabin, who kept a house of board and entertainment for gentlemen, being a house purchased, a few years afterwards, by the late Welcome Arnold, one of our enterprising merchants. . . .

About the time of the shutting up of the shops, soon after sunset, a man passed along the main street, beating a drum and informing the inhabitants of the fact that the *Gaspee* was aground on Namquit Point, and would not float again until three o'clock the next morning; and inviting those persons who felt a disposition to go and destroy that troublesome vessel to repair in the evening to Mr. James Sabin's house. About nine o'clock I took my father's gun and my powder horn and bullets and went to Mr. Sabin's, and found the south east room full of people, where I loaded my gun, and all remained there till about ten o'clock, some casting bullets in the kitchen and others making preparations for departure, when orders were given to cross the street to Fenno's wharf and there embark. . . . A sea captain acted as steersman of each boat, of whom I recollect Capt. Abraham Whipple, Capt. John B. Hopkins (with whom I embarked) and Capt. Benjamin Dunn. A line from right to left was soon formed, with Capt. Whipple on the right and Capt. Hopkins on the right of the left wing (sic)

The party thus proceeded till within about sixty yards of the *Gaspee*, when a sentinel hailed: "who comes there?" No answer. He hailed again, and no answer.

In about a minute Dudingston, mounted on the starboard gunwale, in his shirt, and hailed. No answer. He hailed again, when Capt. Whipple answered as follows: "I am the sheriff of the County of Kent, G—d d—n you. I have got a warrant to apprehend you G—d d—n you, so surrender, G—d d—n you!"

I took a seat on the main thwart, near the larboard rowlock, with my gun by my right side facing forward. As soon as Dudingston began to hail, Joseph Bucklin, who was standing on the main thwart, by my right side, said to me, "Ephe, reach me your gun, I can kill that fellow. I reached it to him accordingly, when, during Captain Whipple's replying, Bucklin fired and Dudingston fell, and

Bucklin exclaimed, "I have killed the rascal." In less than a minute after Capt. Whipple's answer the boats were alongside of the *Gaspee* and boarded without opposition. The men retreated below as Dudingston entered the cabin.

As soon as it was discovered that he was wounded, John Mawney, who had for two or three years been studying physic and surgery, was ordered to go into the cabin and dress Dudingston's wound, and I was ordered to assist him. . . . orders were given to the schooner's company to collect their clothing and everything belonging to them, and put them into their boats, as all of them were to be put on shore. . . . They departed and landed Dudingston at the old still-house wharf, at Pawtuxet, and put the chief into the house of Joseph Rhodes.

Soon after all the party were ordered to depart, leaving one boat for the leaders of the expedition, who soon set the vessel on fire and consumed her to the water's edge.

Among those whose names have been mentioned above as prominently connected with the burning of the *Gaspee*, we have noticed that of Abraham Whipple. John B. Hopkins, the son of Commodore Esek Hopkins, and the nephew of that Stephen Hopkins who signed the Declaration of Independence, also served in the American Navy. John Mawney, mentioned as the physician who dressed Dudingston's hurts, was a man of great reading and reputed wisdom, we are told, but an infidel. John Brown, at whose call the men of Providence had gathered for this daring act of retaliation, was a merchant of Providence and a descendant of the Rev. Chad Brown, who was one of Roger Williams associates. He was one of the most prominent citizens of the Colony. Another leader was Benjamin Page, a wealthy shipmaster. Joe Bucklin, who was reputed to have shot Dudingston, was a *restarateur*, well known

in Providence. Turpin Smith, another of the party, was in after years one of the most respected citizens of Providence, and indeed of Rhode Island. The last survivor of that rememberable exploit was Colonel Bowen, whose narrative has just been quoted. Fifty-four years after the scene described in these pages, four participants in the burning of the *Gaspee* were publicly honoured for the deed and were driven in state, on the Fourth of July, through the streets of the city where once a price had been set upon their heads by the British Crown. They were Ephraim Bowen, Benjamin Page, John Mawney, and Turpin Smith.

This affair created intense excitement not only in Rhode Island but throughout the American Colonies and the investigation which followed, instead of allaying the excitement, kept it at fever heat. It was a powerful incentive to resistance in the minds of the people, whose thoughts were thus gradually becoming familiar with the idea of armed self-protection against the efforts of the Crown to interfere with their rights and liberties.

The deed accomplished, it clearly became the duty of all officers of the Crown or Colony to go through the form of an investigation and to offer suitable rewards for the apprehension of those who had taken part in the adventure. Into the investigation the officers of the Crown entered heartily and with a vigorous purpose to bring some one to justice, and the officers of the Colony, with tongue in cheek, made a great pretence

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THE BURNING OF THE "GASPEE"

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of activity. The men, well known to every one in their city, and probably ere long to the whole Colony, walked unmolested while their case was being investigated and Governor and King were offering large sums for their arrest and conviction.

First of all the Governor, as in duty bound, issued a proclamation that had a fierce sound and may have blinded the King's ministers and commissioners.

By the Honourable Joseph Wanton Esquire, Governor, Captain-General and Commander-in-Chief of and over the English Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, in New England, in America.

A PROCLAMATION.

Whereas, on Tuesday the 9th inst. in the night a number of people, unknown, boarded his Majesty's armed schooner the *Gaspee*, as she lay aground on a point of land called Namquit, a little to the southward of Pawtuxet, in the colony aforesaid, who dangerously wounded William Duddingston, the commander, and by force took him with all his people put them into boats and landed them near Pawtuxet and afterwards set fire to the said schooner whereby she was totally destroyed. I have therefore thought fit by and with the advice of such of his Majesty's Council as could be reasonably convened to issue this proclamation strictly charging and commanding all his Majesty's officers within the said colony, both civil and military, to exert themselves with the utmost vigilance to discover and apprehend the persons guilty of the aforesaid atrocious crime, that they may be brought to condign punishment, and I do hereby offer a reward of one hundred pounds sterling, money of Great Britain, to any person or persons who shall discover the perpetrators of the said villainy, to be paid immediately upon the conviction of any one or more of them.

And the several sheriffs in the said Colony are hereby required forthwith to cause this proclamation to be posted up in the most public places in each of the towns in their respective counties.

Given under my hand and seal at arms at Newport this twelfth day of June in the twelfth year of the reign of his Most Sacred Majesty, George III by the Grace of God King of Great Britain and so forth. Anno Domini 1772.

J. WANTON.

By his Honour's Command
HENRY WARD, Secretary
God Save the King.

The following is Lieutenant Dudingston's account of the burning of the *Gaspee*, transmitted by him to his superior officer as soon as he was able to write:

PAWTUXET, 12th June, 1772.

SIR: On Wednesday morning about one o'clock, as His Majesty's schooner was lying upon a spite of land called Nancutt, the sentinels discovered a number of boats coming down the river toward us. As soon as I was acquainted with it, I came upon deck and hailed the boats, forbidding them to come near the schooner, or I should order them to be fired upon. They made answer, they had the sheriff with them and must come on board. I told them the sheriff could not be admitted on board at that time of night, on which they set up a halloo and rowed as fast as they could towards the vessel's bows. I was then using every means in my power to get the guns to bear upon them, which I could not effect as they came right ahead of the vessel, she being aground.

I then ordered the men to come forward with their small arms and prevent them from boarding. As I was standing myself to oppose them, and making a stroke with my sword, at the man who was attempting to come up, at that instant I found myself disabled in my left arm and shot through the groin. I then stepped from the gunwale with an intention to order them to retire to close quarters, but soon saw that most of them were knocked down and myself twice, after telling them I was mortally wounded. They damned me and said I was not wounded; if I was my own people had done it. As loss of blood made me drop down upon deck, they ordered me to beg my life and commanded the people to surrender. As I saw there was no possibility of defending the vessel against such numbers, who were in every respect armed and commanded with

regularity, by one who personated the sheriff, I thought it best for the people's preservation to propose to them that I would order them to surrender if they assured me they should not be hurt, which they did. I then called out which was immediately echoed by the people around me, that I had given them orders to surrender. They hurried all the people below and ordered them up one by one and tied their hands behind their backs, then ordered them into different boats. I then begged they would either dispatch me or suffer my wounds to be dressed. Upon that they allowed my servant to be unbound, to get me things for dressing and carried me below. But what was my surprise when I came down in the cabin, two surgeons were ordered down from the deck, to dress me, who were furnished with drops and began to scrape lint for that purpose. During this time I had the opportunity of observing the persons of about a dozen who were in the cabin. They appeared to me to be merchants and masters of vessels, who were at my bureau reading and examining my papers. They promised to let me have the schooner's books and my clothes; instead of which, as they were handing me up to go in the boat, they threw them overboard, or into some of the boats. I was soon afterwards thrust into a boat, almost naked. During the time they were rowing me on shore, I had an opportunity of observing the boat, which appeared to me to be a very large long boat. I saw by the man who steered her a cutlass lying by him, and directing the men to have their arms ready. As soon as they put off the sheriff gave them orders to land me on some neck and the boat to come off immediately and told me if I did not consent to pay the value of the rum I must not expect to have anything saved. I made answer whatever reparation law would give I was ready and willing; as to my things they might do with them as they pleased. They were accordingly going to land me on this neck, which I told them they had better throw me overboard. One man, who had a little more humanity than any of the rest said they had better land me on the point of Pawtuxet. As I was unable to stand they unbound five of the men and gave them a blanket to carry me up. When I was half way on shore I heard some of the schooner's guns go off and heard the people say she was on fire. I had not been carried far when the people exclaimed, I was on an island, and they saw no house on which they laid me down and went in quest of one. Soon after they came to acquaint me they saw one, which I was

carried to, a man was immediately despatched to Providence for a surgeon. A little after the people joined me with a midshipman ; all of whom I could persuade I sent on board His Majesty's sloop *Beaver*. The schooner is utterly destroyed and everything appertaining to her, me and the schooner's company. If I live I am not without hope of being able to convict some of principal people that were with them. The pain, with the loss of blood rendered me incapable of informing you before of the particulars. There are none of the people anyways wounded, but bruised with handspikes. I am Sir, your most Humble Servant,

W. DUDDINGSTON.

Antedating the report of Lieutenant Duddingston to Admiral Montagu, then at Boston, a communication was addressed from that officer to Governor Wanton, as follows:

BOSTON, Eleventh June, 1772.

SIR : Enclosed I transmit Your Excellency a disposition taken before me of the piratical proceedings of the people of Providence in Rhode Island government, by attacking His Majesty's schooner with an armed force, wounding her commander in a dangerous manner and then setting her on fire. I am to request Your Excellency will use such methods as you shall think proper for apprehending and bringing the offenders to justice. I am now dispatching a sloop to England with the account I enclose to you and am Your Excellency's most obedient Humble Servant,

J. MONTAGU.

His Excellency, Governor WANTON.

The deposition of William Dickenson, examined as to his knowledge of the burning of the *Gaspee*, was enclosed with this letter.

The report made to the British Secretary of State, Lord Hillsborough, by Governor Wanton, upon the destruction of the *Gaspee*, contains two statements that

deserve particular attention. The first of these is to the effect that immediately after the loss of his vessel, and while still thought to be fatally wounded, Lieutenant Duddingston refused to give Mr. Sessions, the Deputy Governor, any account of the events of the night of the 9th of June "till he had done it to his commanding officer, at a court-martial, to which if he lived he must be called; but if he died, he desired it might all die with him." There is something significant in this reticence when we recall the fact that Lieutenant Duddingston could hardly be supposed to be ignorant of the name or person of at least one of the attacking party and a statement from him would probably have led to the conviction of several of the leaders. We have the testimony of the surgeon who bound his wounds and attended him in the cabin of the *Gaspee* (John Mawney) that the lieutenant offered him a gold buckle, in gratitude for his services, and that, although he declined this, he afterwards accepted a silver one, which he wore for many years. He furthermore says, speaking of an interruption that occurred after he had dressed the wounds of the officer: "During this, Mr. Duddingston was carried out of the room, and I never saw him afterwards, notwithstanding *I had several invitations*, through Dr. Henry Sterling." It is hard to believe that had Duddingston desired to earn the rewards, amounting to thousands of dollars, offered by the British Crown and by the Rhode Island Assembly, for the persons who burned the *Gaspee*, he might have done so.

A pertinent statement made by Governor Wanton bears upon another phase of the subject and stands in refutation of the idea presented in nearly all accounts of the affair, that the Colony of Rhode Island was a nest of illicit traders.

As a proof, My Lord, that the trade of this colony stands upon as fair and legal a footing as the trade of any part of His Majesty's dominions, out of two hundred sail of vessels which have entered this port [Newport] since the 1st day of May last [letter written June 16th] only two in that number have been prosecuted and condemned for breach of acts of trade, *one* of *which belongs to Massachusetts Bay*, notwithstanding they have been searched and rummaged with the greatest severity.

The testimony of Governor Wanton upon this subject must be taken as of the greatest weight and authority, because of his character and standing and for the additional reason that he was thoroughly loyal to the British Crown, as he afterwards proved by adhering to it in the Revolutionary struggle, suffering in consequence the confiscation of his American estate on Prudence Island.

To quote once more from Trevelyan :

Thurlow, in his capacity as Attorney General, denounced the crime [the burning of the *Gaspee*] as of a deeper dye than piracy and reported that the whole business was of five times the magnitude of the stamp act. . . . By a royal order the council and authorities of Rhode Island were commanded to deliver the culprits into the hands of the Admiral, with a view to their being tried in London. . . . Stephen Hopkins, the old Chief Justice of Rhode Island [whose nephew was one of the party that burned the *Gaspee*] refused to lend his sanction to their arrest, in face of the destiny that awaited them. . . . The estimable and amiable

Dartmouth, who was now Secretary for the Colonies, contrived to hush up a difference which, as he was told by a wise and friendly correspondent, if it had been pushed to an extreme issue, would have set the continent into a fresh flame.

Chief Justice Horsmanden, writing from New York to the Earl of Dartmouth on February 20, 1773, presents

TIVERTON WHARVES. THE SITE OF JOSEPH WANTON'S SHIPYARDS

his view of Rhode Island at that day—a view not at all sympathetic or favourable, but perhaps not less valuable on that account. He was a commissioner in the *Gaspee* affair.

On my arrival at that place [Rhode Island] on the 31st of Decr. I was surprised to find that the main of our errand was become public, which in prudence was to be kept secret; nevertheless your Lord's letter to Gov. Wanton [relative to the burning of the *Gaspee*] was published in the Boston weekly paper and spread industriously all over New England. However amazing to us, upon

enquiry it came out that the Gov. had communicated it to the Assembly, who had got it printed: upon expostulating with the Gov. upon it he said he by law was obliged to communicate all dispatches from the Ministry to his corporation, and sworn to do so: that such dispatches were usually directed to the Gov. and Company. . . . My Lord, as to the Gov^{t}., if it deserves that name, it is a downright democracy. The Gov. is a mere nominal one and therefore a cypher, without power or authority, entirely controlled by the populace, elected annually as all other magistrates and officers whatsoever. The Gov. treated the commissioners with great decency and respect, and to do that gentleman justice, behaved with great propriety as a commissioner, except in communicating your Lordship's letter to the corporation, which indeed he seemed constrained to do under the above circumstances.

It was perhaps the first time that this conscientious royalist of the eighteenth century had been brought face to face with a practical democracy and the near view did not appeal to him. To one of his habits of thought it was simply no government—nothing worth the name. These people actually elected whom they pleased to govern them and insisted that he govern in no other way than as they pleased. What well-constituted British mind, trained to the grooves of a well-ordered officialdom, could be expected to view it with anything less than disgust.

Commissioner Horsmanden reports that upon the first news of the "villainy" Governor Wanton issued a proclamation offering a thousand pounds reward for the apprehension of the perpetrators, "but without effect." He also refers to the testimony of the negro witness as being of doubtful value, then returns to the subject of Rhode Island's republicanism and the breadth of her

charter. One very remarkable feature of the *Gaspee* affair is that although the attack upon the King's vessel had been made openly and in a sense publicly, and the names of the participants could not by any means have been a profound secret even to the officers of the colony or to the commander of the *Gaspee*, yet no one from Providence, Newport, or Bristol, nor from the officers of the Colony or Crown, came forward to claim the large reward offered for the apprehension of the ringleaders. The amounts offered by both the King and the Colony amounted to a sum that would have been regarded as a comfortable fortune at that time.

Naturally the question arises, what was the incentive to silence, or the restraining influence that prevented betrayal? It may reasonably be supposed that public sentiment was so strongly enlisted on the side of the patriot party that the lot of informer would have been one of extreme unpopularity, if not of peril. There seems to be no other solution in view of all the facts, to a silence so remarkable. The whole population of Providence must be charged with the responsibility or credit for this daring adventure.

The Liberty Party, as it was called, had in 1772 become a numerous and weighty faction in New England and the neighbouring colonies. To those who advocated resistance to the interference of Great Britain, the events in Rhode Island were of supreme interest. Thousands of people in America waited anxiously the

result of the enquiry that was immediately set on foot by the Crown.

The torch that fired the *Gaspee* made a beacon fire for all the friends of freedom in the colonies, and everywhere men were asking what the outcome was to be.

Governor Hutchinson, in August of that year, wrote from Boston that:

> People in this province, both friends and enemies of the government are in great expectation from the late affair in Rhode Island of the burning of the King's schooner *Gaspee*, and they consider the manner in which the news of it will be received in England and the measures to be taken decisive. *If it is passed over* without a full enquiry and due resentment *our Liberty people will think they may with impunity commit any acts of violence, be they ever so atrocious, and the friends of government will dispond and give up all hopes of being able to withstand the faction.*

The italics have been added to emphasise the significance of this utterance, which contains in a nutshell a confession of the extreme peril to which democratical ideas had brought monarchical interests in America. It shows also how all eyes were directed to Rhode Island, who had eight years before, even previous to the passage of the obnoxious Stamp Act, taken the initiative in resisting the aggressions of the Crown, and who now, a year in precedence of the so-called Boston Tea Party, exhibited for the third time an armed revolt against the officers of the King.

It has been my purpose, in going thus minutely into this story of the destruction of the schooner *Gaspee*, to indicate its foremost rank among the important events

preceding and leading up to the American Revolution. Reread the words of Hutchinson, of Thurlow, and of Dartmouth, already quoted.

"If it is passed over," wrote Hutchinson, "our liberty people will think they may with impunity commit any acts . . . . . and the friends of Government will dispond and give up all hopes of being able to withstand the faction."

"The whole business is of five times the magnitude of the Stamp Act," declared Attorney General Thurlow. "If not hushed up it will set the continent in a flame," said Dartmouth's correspondent.

This act was not the movement of an irresponsible mob. Here was no unguided, obscure party of madcap youths, with painted faces and the mummery of an Indian disguise, following a sudden impulse to destroy. The population of a city met openly, called by a public crier and roused by the beat of a drum through the streets, to a deliberation presided over by men of influence and standing; and they carried out their enterprise without concealment, though no one could doubt that the penalty of death would be inflicted if the British Government laid hands upon any one of them.

John Brown's raid, in its influence upon public sentiment in America, was insignificant compared with the effect produced by the burning of the *Gaspee* and for courage in planning, boldness in execution, and unanimity in resistance to tyranny, the earlier event stands without a parallel in American history.

It is a curious and sad commentary upon the follow-my-leader methods of many alleged historians that not a few text-books purporting to treat of pre-Revolutionary events, have neglected to mention the burning of the *Gaspee.*

Chapter VIII

Rhode Island in the Revolution

IT was the spirit of Rhode Island that led the other colonies in the development of the liberty idea; it was little Rhode Island that took the initiative in revolt against the tyrannous aggressions of the mother country, setting a pace for larger and wealthier commonwealths to follow; it was the Assembly of Rhode Island that on the 4th of May, 1776, made a declaration of independence, anticipating by two months that other Declaration, signed at Philadelphia by the representatives of the colonies.

Such a prelude might lead one to expect a magnificent war drama, the stress and throes of a terrific struggle, or deeds of martial daring that should eclipse the exploits of ancient Macedonia or Rome.

What in fact do we find? Simply that from almost the commencement of the war, for nearly three years, the brave little colony was gripped in the mailed hand of the enemy, her gates guarded and her powers crippled. Still there were moments of achievement, interesting if meagre episodes, a not altogether forgotten

record of stirring events and the long story of almost continuous hardship and suffering.

When the news of Lexington came to Newport, great was the rejoicing. That was in April, 1775. Two months later two vessels, the *Washington* and *Katie*, were chartered and put under the command of Captain Abraham Whipple. One might almost say that the

THE BRITISH FLEET IN NARRAGANSETT BAY

navy of the United States was born in Rhode Island, for not only did she build and man some of the very earliest vessels to take the sea against England, providing many times more than her proportionate share of such vessels during the war, but she also gave to the country more captains and other naval officers than any of the other States. Esek Hopkins has been called the first Commodore of the American Navy, but his fame is hardly as bright as that of Whipple, of whom the stories

told would fill a separate volume. Sir James Wallace, commanding the frigate *Rose*, had commenced a devastating tour of the coast, burning and threatening, when an armed tender belonging to the *Rose* fell in with a sloop commanded by Capt. Whipple. After an interesting fight the Rhode Islander drove his adversary ashore on Conanicut Island and made a prize of her. The exasperated Englishman wrote a note to the perverse American captain, reminding him of his share in burning the *Gaspee* several years before and concluding in these words: "I will hang you at the yard-arm— James Wallace."

To this message Whipple good-naturedly replied: "To Sir James Wallace, Sir: Always catch a man before you hang him. Abraham Whipple."

The breathings of threatenings and slaughter in which Wallace indulged and his immediate efforts to carry them into effect in Rhode Island led to the equipping of two vessels which formed the small foundation of the American navy. The *Washington*, first of these gunboats, had a crew of eighty men and was armed with ten 4 pounders and fourteen swivels, while the other was still smaller.

A few days after "Commodore" Whipple had taken command of his miniature fleet, the *Rose* frigate, together with a sloop of war, tenders, and five prize vessels, lay off Newport, when other sails appeared farther up the bay and lured the *Rose* and her companion to give chase. No sooner were the war vessels out of the

way than the people of Newport sallied out in boats, retook the prizes and sent them safe out of reach. For this and other offences the irate Wallace threatened to bombard Newport, but was in some unknown way deflected from his purpose and finally sailed away.

In August more vessels were secured for defence, and the Rhode Island delegates in Congress instructed "to use their whole influence for building at the Continental expense a fleet of sufficient force for the protection of these colonies, and for employing them in such manner and places as will most effectually annoy our enemies and contribute to the common defence of these colonies."

This movement on the part of Rhode Island led directly to the establishment of a National Navy. We find Sir James Wallace through all this time terrorising the towns along the coast and upon the shores of Narragansett Bay. He threatened Newport and Providence and finally bombarded and partly burned Bristol, his leniency in the first and second case and his unprovoked brutality in the third being equally inexplicable to sane people.

Through that summer and fall the breach widened and the preparations for war became more resolute and unequivocal. A test oath was required to weed out Tories; the Governor, Joseph Wanton, was deposed and Nicholas Cooke elected in his place. An effort was made to raise land forces and the inhabitants were put upon a war footing, all those able to bear arms being bidden to hold themselves in readiness. There was some

attempt at building defences, and in the summer of 1776 work was commenced upon a fort at Brenton's Point. On the eve of the battles of Long Island and Harlem Heights, State troops were sent to Washington's aid, and already a number of Rhode Island men, chief among whom was Washington's trusted friend General Greene, were doing good service in the Continental Army.

There were several false alarms and reported advances of the enemy before he finally appeared upon Narragansett Bay in force, but at length in the last days of 1776 a fleet composed of a number of frigates and ships of the line appeared, and, landing such an overwhelming body of troops that resistance was out of the question, took possession of Newport. The little American army of six hundred men that were on Rhode Island went into camp at Tiverton and Bristol.

The three years of the British occupation of Newport were direful times for Rhode Island. Her commerce was crippled, her merchants impoverished, her crops destroyed, stock stolen and slaughtered, forests burned, plantations ruined, and homes violated. A hungry swarm of locusts, stripping the earth of every green thing, would furnish a fair type of the British army of occupation on Narragansett Bay.

There were certain incidents of the war connected with the local history of Providence or Bristol, that I have mentioned in the chapters particularly devoted to those places. Others, which have more than local importance, we may discuss here. Prominent among the

more dashing episodes of the war was the capture of General Prescott, the narration of which has probably made as deep an impression upon the popular imagination as any of the minor events of American history.

Colonel William Barton, who at the time was stationed with the Continental soldiers at Tiverton, had, according to his portrait, a long head and a mouth which betokened a keen sense of humour. From his memorable adventure upon the night of the 9th of July, 1777, we may conclude that in those particulars the likeness is fairly accurate.

Barton got it into his long head that it would be a delicious pleasantry and not an impossible feat to run the gauntlet of all the British vessels in Narragansett Bay and the guards upon the island of Aquidneck, penetrate the enemy's lines to the very headquarters of the commanding officer and steal that important personage. It has been said that the American Colonel conceived the idea that General Prescott would make a good exchange for Lee, who was then a prisoner in the hands of the British, but this seems very doubtful. Love of adventure and delight in a practical joke would furnish sufficient incentive to a man of Barton's type, without borrowing a motive from our after-knowledge of results.

The story of Barton's raid should have been put into heroic verse or have found a place in ballad literature long ago, for never a sortie or strategem that has enriched the border legends of Scotland, nor any wild escapade of Saracen or Cid, can outmatch the steal-

THE CAPTURE OF GENERAL PRESCOTT. BOATS PASSING NEAR BRITISH VESSELS

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ing of General Prescott by a Yankee colonel from Tiverton.

After having been detained for two days by storms at Warwick Neck, Colonel Barton started with five whaleboats and forty volunteers to cross Narragansett Bay, the lower part of which was held by the British. The enemy were in possession of Conanicut, Prudence, and Hope Islands, and had numerous guard boats patroling the waters between, besides several war vessels and miscellaneous shipping.

By keeping a keen watch out, and possibly by previous information of the position of the various vessels and boats, the little flotilla of Americans dodged between Patience and Prudence, and then, continuing down the west shore of the latter island, rounded its lower end, and reached the west shore of Rhode Island without mishap. About midway between Newport and the Bristol Ferry the invaders concealed their boats and made a landing. A negro who had been a servant in the household of the British General is said to have acted as guide; it is certain that some one well acquainted with the position of headquarters was with Barton's party, for they went at once to the farmhouse of Mr. Overing, where Prescott was living.

They do not seem to have made any effort to avoid the sentinel, who challenged as a matter of course. Instead of answering the challenge, Barton cried: "We are looking for deserters. Have you seen any?" For a moment the soldier was thrown off his guard, and as

the American impatiently repeated his question he allowed the leaders of the party to gather about him. In a moment he was overpowered and threatened with death if he cried out.

When the coast was finally clear and guards disposed of, the negro led the way to General Prescott's room, and finding it locked proceeded to butt it open.

Prescott was sitting up in bed when his captors entered. To Barton's questioning he acknowledged himself to be the man they were seeking. Then the Colonel said:

"You are my prisoner."

To his plea to be allowed to dress, Prescott was told that there was no time to spare. He was permitted to wrap himself in his cloak and was conducted to the shore by the way the party had come. General Prescott's aid, Major Barrington, tried to escape from the house by a window, but fell into the hands of Barton's men.

There had been no confusion, no hesitation. The plan worked without a hitch from beginning to end. Prescott was warned to keep silence when the boats in returning passed very close to some British vessels, and he obeyed. In just six and a half hours from the time they had started, the party landed upon the Point, without a single mishap. Then Prescott spoke.

"Sir," said he, "you have made a damned bold push to-night."

On his way to the American headquarters, Prescott was given a chance to rest at an inn, where the inn-

keeper brought him a bowl of some sort of broth. Disgusted with such homely fare, the dainty gentleman threw the contents of the bowl in his host's face. Without a word, the latter went out of the room and wiped his face, then picking up a horsewhip went back to where General Prescott was and gave him a richly deserved whipping. The exchange of Prescott for Lee, which was effected some time later, is familiar history and not pertinent to this narrative.

Of the house in which the daring capture took place, it is said that little or nothing remains. A stream and pond mark the site, which is on the road that extends along the western side of the island, about midway between Middletown and Portsmouth Grove.

The greatest and most beneficial result of Barton's successful raid is one which is often lost sight of—that is, the moral effect upon the Continental army as well as upon the country at large. Wayne's attack upon Stony Point, though of no great military importance, since the Americans were not in a position to retain the ground that had been won so valorously, was well calculated to rouse the drooping spirits of the American patriots, but Wayne's exploit did not have a more beneficial effect in inspiring confidence than did the abduction of Prescott. The arrival of the French fleet under Count D'Estaing, in the summer of 1778, gave opportunity for the planning of a campaign that was expected to free Rhode Island from British domination.

Regarding this project Washington entertained not

only the highest hopes of its success, but also an exalted notion of the important effects that would ensue.

Expectation was at its height. The newly announced alliance of the French had raised hopes of a more vigorous prosecution of the war, and its speedy termination. With the fleet of D'Estaing actually in American waters, it seemed as though victory was about to alight upon the American standard, and even the Commander-in-Chief seems in a measure to have caught the popular enthusiasm.

Having decided that an immediate attack upon New York was inexpedient, a joint attack upon Newport by the French and American forces was agreed upon. D'Estaing and his fleet were to engage the British upon the water side, while a strong land force was at the same time to advance from the north. The movement, if successful, would result in forcing the surrender not only of the property, stores, and munitions of the British troops, but of the men themselves, since retreat was impossible for them.

At that time General Sir Robert Pigott commanded about six thousand men on Rhode Island—that is, upon the island that gives the State its name. The General's headquarters were at Newport, where most of his soldiers were in garrison. There were some bodies of men and a few defences upon the northern end of Aquidneck, but the principal disposition, both of men and implements of war, was south of a strongly entrenched line running clear across the island, about

three miles above Newport. A small fleet in adjacent harbours and anchorages supported the land force, and batteries were so placed as to guard all practicable landing-places.

In pursuance of the plan of attack agreed upon, D'Estaing was to push into the bay, destroying the British vessels and engaging the shore batteries, and by a simultaneous advance a body of American troops, commanded by General Sullivan, would advance from the northern part of the island.

The news of this projected concert of arms roused great enthusiasm throughout New England. Men of all ranks flocked to join the expedition. John Hancock himself led the Massachusetts Militia and Lafayette was one of many sanguine volunteers.

On the 29th of July, the French fleet came to anchor about five miles from Newport not far from the shoal now marked by the Brenton's Reef light-ship. Between Beavertail and Newport, lay three frigates and one or two small vessels belonging to the British Navy, another warship occupied a position in the western channel, and two more guarded the entrance to the Saconnet channel, which was the direct line of communication between the ocean and the American forces at Tiverton.

Immediately upon hearing of the arrival of the fleet of D'Estaing, General Greene, who was at Providence, hastened to go on board the French flagship and arrange the details of the attack. While the Frenchmen

were forcing their way into the harbour, it was decided, the American troops under Sullivan were to cross the upper end of the Saconnet River, at Tiverton, and, landing on the north end of Rhode Island, to make a descent upon Pigott from that side.

Two opposite influences contributed to interfere with the success of this scheme of battle: the first was unnecessary delay; the second, undue precipitation. The delay was caused by the expected arrival of reinforcements from Washington's army; the fatal haste was chargeable to Sullivan's impetuosity. The latter had moved down to Howland's ferry with a force that must have numbered nearly ten thousand men. He halted there to wait the signal to advance, when the rapid retreat of the British soldiers who were posted upon the northern end of Rhode Island proved a temptation too strong to be resisted. Sullivan at once crossed the ferry to take possession of the abandoned works so lately occupied by the enemy.

The sudden withdrawal of the British from the north had been caused by the advance of D'Estaing, who on the eighth of August passed the batteries and entered the main channel, not however without some sharp firing. Upon his approach the British vessels in the channel were run aground, burned, or otherwise destroyed, for fear that they might fall into his hands, and all outposts upon the land were called in.

Yet when Count D'Estaing learned that General Sullivan had advanced without notifying or consulting

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him, his nice sense of propriety was shocked by such a breach of military etiquette, and he was strongly disinclined to proceed with the attack. Whatever he might have done finally was interrupted by the appearance of Lord Howe's fleet off Point Judith. The wasted eleven days had given that nobleman an opportunity to gather reinforcements and sail to the support of his countrymen in the beleaguered town, and while his force was still inferior to that of D' Estaing in the number and armament of his vessels, it was still—English seamen against French—too important an adversary to be slighted.

The French fleet, leaving Sullivan to arrange his affairs as best he might, put out after the English fleet and away they all went, a multitude of white sails set and glistening in the sun, while each side manœuvred for the weather gage, without which neither cared to risk an attack. Away to the southward they went and out of sight, leaving Sullivan very much disgusted. D' Estaing had sent him a message that he would land a force of marines and troops to assist him "when he returned."

The American General, acting against the advice of Lafayette, decided not to wait for the promised aid, but to commence the siege as soon as possible. He had entrenched his position upon Quaker Hill, nearly ten miles north of Newport, and was contemplating an immediate advance, when a storm, long remembered for its violence, swept over the island and wrought the utmost

havoc. Trees were uprooted, houses wrecked, tents and camp equipages whirled away like toys. The men unhoused and drenched, with arms and provisions alike damaged by the storm, were, by morning, dull and dispirited. It has been well said that if the British had sallied out that day from their comfortable quarters the loss to the Americans would have been terrible, but that is one of a long series of postulates that suggest the recasting of all history. If D' Estaing had not waited, if Sullivan had not advanced, if Howe had not arrived, if the storm had not blown—there might be little to write but a very tame victory.

The storm that demolished Sullivan's camp did a devastating work with the opposing fleets and left them in no condition for combat. The great ships of the line and beautiful frigates that had been coquetting with each other for choice of position only a few hours before, were stripped, battered, dismasted, almost wrecked. Howe with his forlorn remnant crept back to New York, and D' Estaing to Newport.

The position of affairs had changed somewhat since his departure. The impetuous Sullivan, with a temperament that did not discredit his name, had spurned all advice and advanced to within two miles of the British lines; throwing up a line of breastworks he made careful preparations for a siege. But hardly had he taken this step when desertions, the bane of the Continental army, began to deplete his force. The place where Sullivan took his position is known as

Honeyman's Hill, so named from a former prominent merchant of Newport.

For several days the Americans lay here in idleness, awaiting the reappearance of D'Estaing, a desultory firing from both sides alone breaking the monotony of delay. At length the French fleet returned, but so battered as to be of little service. The Count pleaded his instructions in order to explain his refusal to co-operate with Sullivan, and his determination to go at once to Boston for necessary repairs. He left the Americans with sore and angry hearts. Their commander issued an intemperate order, announcing his purpose to proceed unaided, and reflecting obliquely upon the Count, but the objectionable portion of this utterance he afterwards sought to soften.

With the departure of the French allies and all hopes of assistance from that quarter, the desertions from the American ranks redoubled, till out of ten thousand men Sullivan had scarcely more than half that number remaining. It soon became apparent that the enterprise must be abandoned, and the question became one of retiring without sacrificing his men, artillery, and baggage.

First the heavy artillery was despatched to the rear as rapidly and secretly as possible, and sent from the island; then the camp was broken and a retreat was commenced upon the night of the twenty-eighth, just one month after the first appearance of the French fleet off Newport. The plan decided upon was to fall back

upon the works at the north end of the island and fortify, there to await the return of D'Estaing from Boston. At daybreak the retreat was discovered by the enemy, but pursuit was checked by the covering parties under Colonels Livingston and Laurens.

The Americans took position on Batt's Hill, the British upon Quaker Hill, about a mile distant, and sharp cannonading with occasional skirmishing ensued; but before noon two British vessels appeared and stood up the Bay with the evident intention of turning Sullivan's flank and capturing a redoubt which covered his right. General Greene defended this work successfully until night. Several hundred men on each side are said to have been killed in this day's engagement. The morning brought renewed cannonading and also the disconcerting news that Lord Howe was advancing with his renovated fleet to assist the Newport garrison. There was but one thing to do. The abandonment of Rhode Island became an imperative and immediate necessity. Under cover of a ruse, Sullivan commenced the withdrawal of his forces. Batt's Hill became the scene of somewhat ostentatious activity. Tents were erected in view of the foe, while men were employed in throwing up earth and strengthening the entrenchments. In the meantime baggage and stores were withdrawn and with nightfall the transportation of the troops commenced. Lafayette had left Sullivan on the day before the retreat, and in seven hours had ridden seventy miles, to Boston, to confer with D'Estaing. Finding help from

that quarter not to be hoped for, he returned on horseback in time to assist in the removal of the troops from Rhode Island. "He arrived in time," says Irving, "to bring off the pickets and covering parties, amounting to a thousand men, which he did in such excellent order that not a man was left behind, nor the smallest article lost."

So the great expedition ended—not a day too soon, for Sir Henry Clinton arrived in the bay with a force of British ships within twenty-four hours after the last man had crossed the ferry. In all of this business we cannot but admire the address and energy of General Sullivan, who, if he did not exhibit the highest generalship in crossing the ferry without waiting for his somewhat incomprehensible French allies, yet showed rare address in every movement during his stay and particularly in his clever retirement.

General Washington's regret was expressed in terms of more vehemence than he was accustomed to indulge in. His disappointment must have been keen when he wrote to his brother Augustine:

> An unfortunate storm and some measures taken in consequence of it by the French Admiral, blasted in one moment the fairest hopes that ever were conceived; and, from a moral certainty of success, rendered it a matter of rejoicing to get our own troops safe off the island. If the garrison of that place, consisting of nearly six thousand men, had been captured, as there was, in appearance at least, a hundred to one in favor of it, it would have given the finishing blow to British pretentions of sovereignty over this country, and would, I am persuaded, have hastened the departure of the troops in New York, as fast as their canvas wings would carry them away.

Such was the end of a great enterprise, that came near being a great fiasco. The effect upon the public mind was depressing, and the army, as usual, suffered in consequence.

Upon a second or third edition of a British chart first published by request of Lord Howe in 1776, and several years later republished with notes and references, there is a summary of the movements of the French fleet before Newport in 1778.

Explaining the situation of the British ships and forces after the 29th of July, 1778, when the French fleet under the Count D'Estaing appeared and anchored off the Harbour at ⌗ [that is at a point marked upon the chart about 2½ miles due south of Prince's Neck and Coggeshall Island] the same day two French frigates went up the Seaconnet passage.

July 30th. Two French line of battle ships, anchored in the Narragansett passage, on which the King's troops quitted Conanicut Island.

August 5th. The French ships came towards Dyer's Island when the British advanced frigates were destroyed and the seamen encamped.

August 8th. The rest of the French fleet came into the harbour and anchored abreast of Gold Island, upon which the King's troops withdrew within the lines . . . (that is on the south side of Prudence Island).

August 9th. The Enemy's forces landed.

Where this landing took place we are not informed. From contemporary writers we have very good accounts of the doings of the French fleet at this time, and many were the criticisms directed against D'Estaing, because he did not land in force to co-operate with General Sullivan. Whether there was an error in the British

Admiralty reports, in the memoranda from which the cartographer engraved his map, or in the accounts given by American historians, I leave the reader to judge.

During the British occupation of Newport there occurred a battle concerning which military histories are usually silent, yet which resulted in dreadful mortality among the hireling soldiers of George III.

On the memorable night of December 22d, 1778, the sentinels were stationed as usual, but with a caution to keep moving; and the troops in barracks passed their time in such rough horse-play as soldiers are wont to indulge in, or gathered about the fires, grumbling; for the sun went down in a stormy sky and the cold increased. No sense of insecurity disturbed the garrison, for it was not such a night as an ordinary foe would choose for attack.

No ordinary enemy was that one who stole noiselessly upon the sentinels in the darkness, that intercepted those who ventured upon the streets, that even invaded barracks and slew the men as they slept in their bunks. An ally, as resistless as it was unlooked for, fought on the American side that night. Its legions were the innumerable hosts of the snow, its weapon a cold so intense that the light barrack walls could not exclude it. Death relieved the sentries at their posts, death overtook the belated soldiers upon the street, and death smote the sleepers in their quarters. The destruction was like that of the Assyrian host when Sennacherib led them against Israel.

There have been many storms that have howled over Aquidneck and many cold winters, but never such a storm nor such bitter cold has been recorded as when the Hessians fell, on outpost, and in quarters, before a foe as silent, as invisible, as death.

For a time military discipline and strength seemed paralysed: the vessels near the shore were driven in and damaged, or wrecked; the coast was practically unguarded for days. If the French fleet had then made a vigorous attack, Newport would have changed hands with scarcely a struggle.

When the British forces finally evacuated Newport they were not driven out by force of arms, nor was the subsequent occupation of the town by the French the result of conquest. Regarding the sojourn there of the latter, there have been many favourable comments, nor have I ever seen a word of censure or disapproval of their conduct while in Rhode Island. Nothing could have served better to remove the popular prejudice against our French allies, than the opportunity that was presented of contrasting their conduct with that of the Hessian savages who had preceded them.

Upon their retirement, the British left blackened ruins. Over five hundred houses were reduced to ashes; barns, stores, and public works were destroyed; even the lighthouse upon Beavertail was wantonly wrecked at the time of their withdrawal. For three years they had been known as vandals and brawlers, and their reputation was not suffered to decline. Nearly one hun-

dred and twenty-five thousand pounds was the estimated money loss through destruction of property accomplished by them in Newport.

On the day of their departure, citizens were warned to keep to their houses under pain of death, and from their windows they watched helplessly while their goods, their cattle, and their slaves were taken away. Fifty-two transports carried the troops with their baggage and plunder, and the melancholy company of Tories who, having welcomed the English invaders, were now fain to depart with them. It was a sad, sordid, despicable exodus, not even dignified by a touch of tragedy.

When the fleet of Rochambeau stood into the harbour and came to an anchor where for so long the ships of King George had distressed the sight, the Newporters were in no mood to make them welcome. Direful tales of French manners and morals had been spread broadcast, the old anger at D'Estaing's desertion, as they chose to consider it, still burned and added to the general distrust, and, besides, had they not endured three years of barrack neighbourhood? Certainly there had been enough of soldier life to satisfy Newport for a generation.

Those soldier-ridden people could hardly believe their senses when the French garrison settled quietly into the places vacated by their foes, and made no disturbance, but treated the inhabitants with deference, kept reasonably sober, and respected property rights.

It was written at that day and has been handed down for the astonishment of this, that even in one case where several apple trees, weighted with fruit, hung over a part of the French camp, the fruit was not touched by the soldiers.

Nowhere do we read of brawls, of drunkenness, of insult, of theft; but, on the contrary, the records are full of praise for the Frenchmen. It is not to be supposed that an army of Gallic angels had flown into Newport, or that all the Englishmen and Hessians who had gone out were devils. The answer to any riddle that may appear to be involved is—discipline. The French soldiers were well officered and the British troops were not.

Rochambeau went vigorously to work and in twelve days completed a system of defences which he considered a sufficient safeguard against attack. An entrenched camp partly enclosed the town and batteries bristled upon every point.

The officers who served under this gallant and soldierly old commander soon won golden opinions from the people who had watched their coming with such dread. With unflagging spirits they made the poor, harassed little remnant of a town, still haunted by the recollection of its losses and suffering, a scene of almost perpetual festivity. They were a rare company, those noble young Frenchmen, the flower of the best society in the politest capital in the world. At home they had been accustomed to the magnificence of the Court and the splendour of the private life of the ancient nobility.

They were familiar with the luxuries that wealth commands and all the deference paid to rank. There could hardly have been a greater contrast presented to the companions of Rochambeau than that which placed in opposition Paris and Newport.

Not even in these later days can any social function in Newport display so brilliant an assembly of foreigners of distinguished birth as that which graced the receptions of impoverished merchants in their battered dwellings in the summer of 1780.

That fine culture of the old nobility of France, about which so much has been said, went deeper than mere polish: it was in the grain, for it did not abate in the little parlours of a half-ruined American village the courtesy demanded in the grand salon of the Tuileries. Ah, what a gay delightful band of brave youth that was, and what a tragic cloud, unseen, hung over many of them! In years to come not a few laid their heads under the hungry guillotine, or escaped only to wander, impoverished and sad, in exile.

There were Chastellux, de Barras, Deuxponts, Lauzan-Biron, de Soleux, Talleyrand, de Broglie, Viomenil, La Touche, and many another—to repeat the list is to recite the honour roll of France as it was before the old order changed. One commanded a regiment under the Duc d' Orléans in the Vendée and was guillotined, another served with distinction under Napoleon, a third —and to him we owe a deeper debt—wrote those recollections of *Travels in America* that have proved

such a valuable side-light on our early national history. Hardly one but in some way distinguished himself in subsequent years, upon a broader stage.

The Newport stage at that time certainly was not a broad one. Rochambeau was held in check by his instructions and for some time remained inert at Newport, neither to his own satisfaction nor that of Washington. His headquarters were in a house afterward known as "the old Vernon house" on the corner of Clarke and Mary streets. Here Washington visited him and won the admiration of the generous Frenchman by the grace of a character at once simple and majestic. In the Vernon house at a reception given in his honour, the future President and Father of his Country danced a minuet with "the beautiful Miss Champlain." It is said that the French officers took the instruments from the musicians and played for Washington to dance: this is upon the authority of an eye-witness.

Those months of inaction were productive of letters and memoirs, some of which have been preserved, and give pleasant glimpses not only of the social life of the town, but of several of the belles to whom the Frenchmen gave their admiration and compliments if not their hearts. Miss Redwood was of these, her name to-day one of the most familiar in Newport; another was Polly Lawton, a Quaker maiden; and doubtless then as now the American girl was a revelation to the young men from the other side of the water.

Among the traditions that have survived a century and a half of changing populations and altered conditions of life, there is an old love-story, which began some years before the Revolution, though its climax came in that distressed time.

Long ago, before the War for Independence, a young man named Bell came to Newport in one of the King's ships. He was connected with the revenue service, and officers in that branch were in particular disfavour with merchants who, however loudly they might shout "God save the King!" yet growled mightily if he interfered with their commerce. Their chronic animosity to all tax collectors and revenue men had been worked to a fever by the hated Sugar Act, and the means taken to enforce it. The Rhode Islander made his own laws and his own ships. He elected his own governor and paid his own expenses. He had long ago boasted of living under a "democratical" government, and he was a free-trader.

The *St. John*, of evil repute, whose story I have given in another place, was in Narragansett Bay for the purpose of enforcing the obnoxious act, and Ensign Bell was included in her unpopularity. The merchants looked upon him and his associates in very much the same way that an Irish tenant regards a tithe proctor.

Notwithstanding the fact that Bell was by virtue of his trade a most obnoxious person in the eyes of the merchants, he was nevertheless not at all disliked by the daughters of those stern fathers. Before long an

attachment grew up between the revenue officer and a maiden whose father was one of the most bitter and obstinate of free-traders. It seems hardly necessary to record the fact that when the attachment was discovered by the girl's father he turned the suitor out of doors and read his daughter a lecture upon the perversity of her preference. But when did obstacles, banishment, or lectures afford more than a temporary check to the course of true love? The couple met at the houses of indulgent friends and their troth was plighted in the good old-fashioned, romantic way, when Bell was ordered back to England.

Parting from the young lady he vowed that he would come again and at last put upon her hand an opal ring that had belonged to his mother. With this betrothal he left her, with what sadness we can well imagine, and she took the ring from her finger and wore it secretly upon her bosom.

The years slipped away and the great struggle that was to separate the American Colonies from the Mother Country commenced. It seemed as if evil fortune had now raised an insurmountable barrier between lover and lady-love, but he fought for his King and dreamed of promotion that would make winning her possible when the war was over; and she felt the ring move with her heart-beats, and waited, and hoped.

Such a story, had it been fiction, must have had a happy ending: but it was not to be so. In an engagement off Hatteras, Bell was killed, and in some way the

news came to Newport. Then Mary, his betrothed, placed his ring openly upon her finger, no longer afraid of her father's wrath; but with her hope her life ebbed away, so that in a few months she lay upon her death-bed.

To a dear friend she entrusted the ring, to be given to that friend's oldest girl child, with her own name, Mary. But no good fortune ever accompanied that gift. It was traced through several hands and in each case disaster and death accompanied it, till at last it was lost sight of. One wonders whether the opal is still worn upon some fair hand and whether it still is, to use the quaint, expressive old phrase, "haunted with a sorrow."

Chapter IX

The Narragansett Country

THE elder Winthrop thus described the Narragansett country in 1634: "The country on the west of the bay of Narragansett is all champain for many miles, but very stony and full of Indians." For "champain" we may read, "a flat, open country, fit for farming," and the description is good to-day, except for the absence of the red savages. The ancient lands of those aboriginal Americans, who gave their name to the country, extended from Greenwich Bay to Point Judith, and from Narragansett Bay westward to the country of the fierce Pequots. At a later day the term Narragansett Country designated little besides South Kingstown.

All the fierce boundary disputes between Rhode Island and Connecticut, quarrels that occupied the English courts for many years, hinged upon the meaning of a single name. The Rhode Island men held that when the Narragansett River was mentioned in their charter, the stream referred to was the Pawcatuck, that had its rise in Wardon's Pond, near the great swamp; but the Connecticut party contended that the

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western arm of the great bay itself was the intended boundary. As the Connecticut claim would have wiped nearly the whole of Rhode Island from the map, the dispute was naturally an exceedingly warm one.

The most interested and most vehement parties to the discussion were two great land companies, the first headed by John Hull, the Boston goldsmith and mint-master, and the other by Humphrey Atherton. The real peopling of the country began in 1657 with what was known as the Pettaquamscutt purchase, made by John Hull and his companions. All of these, except the leader, are said to have been actual settlers. The other party, formed two years later, anticipated some of the great land speculators of after-days and was not in any way beneficial to the infant Colony.

Miss Caroline Hazard, in her valuable study of early Narragansett life, says that "the Atherton company seems to have been a speculation of absentee landlords." Dr. Edward Channing calls the members of that company "anti-Rhode Islanders in spirit." One of their leaders was the younger Winthrop, afterwards of Connecticut, and his influence, both at home and in England, was strenuously directed towards robbing the settlers of Rhode Island of their charter rights.

The price paid by Hull and his companions for the Pettaquamscutt purchase, which included all, or nearly all, of the present Washington County, was sixteen pounds in money, and other considerations. The Atherton claim overlay the earlier one, covering the lands

already purchased. The titles that this company secured were in some cases acquired by a unique method. For certain depredations committed, or charged to have been committed, by Indians, Massachusetts claimed an indemnity. Atherton, Winthrop, and others, by taking a hand in this business, obtained as security for the payment of the indemnity, mortgages upon Indian lands. Whether or not the Indians understood the nature of a mortgage is doubtful, they certainly made no move towards redeeming their land and the inevitable foreclosure put the shrewd Massachusetts men in possession, if not of the land, at least of a claim upon which they might stand while making war upon the Pettaquamscutt purchasers. The clearest thing about the whole series of transactions seems to be that the red men were generally in the dark about the meaning of the various deeds to which they affixed their marks.

It was, as I have said, between these two claimants that the boundary war seems to have been principally carried on. A grant made by the English Crown to the Earl of Warwick in 1631, and confirmed in 1662, made the latter a claimant to Rhode Island territory. The name of Warwick still marks a prominent point upon the upper western shore of Narragansett Bay.

The conflicting purchase claims were finally settled in 1679, and sometime later the King's Commissioners cut the knot in the boundary question by erecting in the Narragansett country a separate government, known as the King's Province. Kingstown, by the way, was

incorporated in 1674 for the avowed purpose of obstructing Connecticut in her movements. The dispute was not settled by one decision, but was reopened and reargued before new ministers and new commissioners, till finally the Connecticut party was forced to accept defeat.

Between Saunderstown and Hammond Hill, in Washington County, or, to be more definite, in Kingstown, there runs a delectable little stream with the musical name of Pettaquamscutt. It flows southward three or four miles and then merges into an inlet or tidewater creek that is shaped like a broad and rather flat Y, the base of which opens upon the bay nearly opposite Beavertail Light. Between the mouth of the inlet and the more rocky neighbourhood of the Pier, nearly two miles to the southward, there is a long stretch of sand, famous as Narragansett Beach. Parallel with the beach and with the southern arm of Pettaquamscutt Inlet, there is a low ridge of land that was known for many years as Mumford's, till it became the home of Governor William Sprague and his accomplished wife, well known in Washington society in her maiden days as Miss Kate Chase.

To the west of Pettaquamscutt Inlet is a long ridge, steep and high for that part of the country, that terminates in one of the most attractive sites upon the bay. From Tower Hill the view is only second to that from Mount Hope, which is plainly distinguishable to the north-east. Eastward the eye ranges across the

end of Conanicut to Newport, or past the lighthouse on Beavertail, to the rim of the ocean; beyond which no land interposes nearer than the coast of Spain. Southward over the clustering houses of Wakefield and the glistening waters of Point Judith Pond, there sleeps in calm, or rolls and lashes in storm, the ten mile belt of ocean that separates Block Island from the mainland, and then the gleam of sunlight upon innumerable sails and on the walls of houses that stand like separate stones in a fine mosaic, small but sharply distinct, along the shore of that paradise of all good fishermen.

The conglomerate roofs of that city of nomads, Narragansett Pier, lie almost at our feet, but beyond the outskirts of crowding hostelries and pretentious "cottages" there is a scattered fringe of older houses, a few quaint reminders of that earlier day when the aristocratic families of the Narragansett country kept alive the old traditions of luxury without ostentation and hospitality without stint.

Tower Hill has its own portion of colonial history, not by any means to be neglected nor forgotten. In 1672 the General Assembly, sitting at Newport, appointed four commissioners "to go over to Narragansett and take view of such places there and thereabout that are fit for plantations." The Colony announced an intention to induce the peopling of such lands. This must not be understood as conflicting with the purchase of tracts by the great proprietors, but rather

in the light of an effort to induce tenants to settle upon them. About this time, in order to further the purposes described, and probably urged by the Narragansett landowners, the Court of General Assembly went to Narragansett and met at the house of Mr. Jireh Bull, upon Tower Hill. Here again a year later, the Governor came with the great Quaker preacher and leader, George Fox, who spoke to a congregation gathered from all the frontier, even as far as Connecticut. This gathering reminds one of those that at a later day marked the rise of Methodism in the South. No doubt many of the people from beyond the Pawcatuck, followed the old Pequot trail that ran to the north of Quonochontaug, through Charleston and Kingston, and then northerly towards Wickford and East Greenwich. The highway afterwards followed the course of this Indian road. Speaking of the meeting at Jireh Bull's house, Fox afterwards wrote: "Most of the people were such as had never heard of Friends before, but they were mightily affected and a great desire is there after the truth among them." For a while a congregation of Friends met at Tower Hill, at the same house, sometimes under the ministration of John Burnyate or of John Cartwright. During King Philip's war, on a December night in 1675, the savages attacked the house and burned it, having slain all of its occupants. It was the news of this outrage that broke the power of the Narragansett Indians, for it brought on the great swamp fight with its brutal retaliation. For

many years a court house stood upon Tower Hill, and after the destruction of Jireh Bull's house, the Friends built a meeting-house upon the hillside near by.

That geographical area and historical importance have no necessary connection, has been proved so often that even Texans acknowledge the truth; yet it would seem as though Pettaquamscutt had double its share of celebrity. It is not that Narragansett Pier is in the immediate vicinity, nor that billionaires have angled in its waters, nor even that "Shepherd Tom" Hazard with all his innumerable kinsmen, since the settlement of Boston Neck, have not only held actual title deeds to many acres, but also a "rambler's lease" that has covered the whole country side. This is where Gilbert Stuart was born; where Oliver Hazard Perry and his hardly less famous brother learned the secrets of that sail-craft without which no Narragansett boy has ever gone out into the world; where the Minturns lived, and where Whalley, the regicide—but this claim we must examine later.

Gilbert Stuart, when in England, was once asked where he was born. He answered with no less humour than loyalty, "In Narragansett, six miles from Pottawoone and ten miles from Papasquash and about four miles from Conanicut and not far from the spot where the famous battle with the Pequots was fought." We may fairly doubt if the questioner, being better acquainted with the geography of the Thames than the Pettaquamscutt, was any the wiser for the painter's explanation.

Stuart, perhaps the most widely known of American portraitists, saw the light in Narragansett in 1756. The neighbourhood in which his boyhood was passed was sparsely settled, and the country was generally divided among wealthy and aristocratic proprietors. The Narragansett region was famous for its plantations and its products, but not celebrated for its culture in art. No one can predict where the lightning of genius will strike, or knows what vagrant influence first found young Stuart and inoculated him with a desire to paint. His first professional performances, we are told, were executed in Newport, where he found some sitters, but when opportunity offered he made his appearance in England, where he studied seriously and attained a good rank among the foremost artists of his day. When he returned to America, he lived again for a time, with his accomplished daughter, near the scenes among which his boyhood had been passed.

Somehow Gilbert Stuart, in spite of his birth and residence in the Narragansett country, seems an alien. Perhaps it was his long residence abroad, but possibly even more than that, the remoteness of his spirit and aim from all the interests of those about him, that makes him appear as a stranger in the land of his birth. The Perrys, on the contrary, are as much a part of that country as the rocks and the sand of its shore. They were typical, normal, Narragansett Bay boys, born with a tiller in one hand and a main-sheet in the other, learning the vocabulary of the sea along with their

nursery tales, and knowing the feel of the wind by instinct, as the young hawks do.

Captain Christopher Raymond Perry, the father of the two future Commodores, took to the water at an early age, as ducks and Rhode Islanders are commonly supposed to do, and saw blue water first as cabin boy of a privateer. He served at different times in private armed vessels, merchantmen and war vessels, and at last obtained command, in 1798, of the United States frigate *General Greene*. It was as a midshipmite in this vessel, under his father's eye, that Oliver Hazard Perry commenced the career in which he was destined to win, at the early age of twenty-seven, a place in the first rank of American heroes.

Passing over the early years of experience and adventure, the service in West Indian waters, the exciting cruise to the Mediterranean, with the lesson administered to Tripoli and her corsairs, and all the other preparatory work which went to the shaping of a great commander, we hasten to the time when he won the recognition of Congress for his seamanship and courage in assisting the ship *Diana*, off the coast of Georgia. He then commanded one of the best of the small vessels in our little navy, *The Revenge*, and was probably as proud as a young officer is apt to be with his foot on his own quarter-deck. Perry did not, however, long enjoy the command of his little vessel. He was at home in the winter of 1811 and in January sailed from Newport, intending to go to New London; but

by the time he was off Point Judith everything was covered with an impenetrable fog through which it was impossible to see from one side of the vessel to the other. "The thickest fog I shall ever see," Perry wrote afterwards to a friend. Through this dense atmosphere the *Revenge* crept, under the guidance of a pilot who claimed to know his business, till suddenly some one called "breakers," and the pilot broke down and confessed that he was utterly lost. Before there was time to take any action beyond an attempt to anchor, the unfortunate vessel was flung and ground upon the rocks, where she soon began to break up. So wise and energetic did the young commander prove himself, that before the hull had fallen to pieces every bit of armament, furnishing, and rigging, together with personal effects of those aboard her, had been rowed ashore in the boats. The spot where the *Revenge* was lost was near Watch Hill, at the mouth of the Pawcatuck River. Perry demanded a court-martial and the court not only exonerated but praised him for his judgment.

That same year Perry married Miss Mason of Newport, but after a little more than a year of wedded life he was made Master Commandant in the Navy, and, his application for active service being accepted, he set out for that scene of action that was soon to become for him the theatre of his imperishable renown.

Every schoolboy knows the story of that fight, where the young man of twenty-seven, in a disabled ship,

fought single-handed against the British fleet, commanded by one of Nelson's captain's; how the calm kept the American vessels from advancing to the aid of their flag-ship till her hull was riddled, her spars a tangled wreck, her scuppers running blood and but five men aboard able to hand a rope or pull a lanyard; how, when at last the foremost of his own fleet had drifted near, Perry crossed to her in an open boat under the fiercest fire, and raising his signal upon her fought the battle out and won. It is a wonderful story, that never grows stale by repeated telling, and never has been eclipsed by the achievements of later wars and modern commanders.

A boy who stood by Oliver Perry's side through all that bloody day, was his younger brother Matthew Calbraith, who in the fulness of time won from Japan that memorable treaty that opened the Kingdom of the Mikado to the influences of Western civilisation and prepared her to take her place in time among the world powers.

Such men as these that I have named Kingstown has produced, and others who have upheld the credit of their native shore in the Army and Navy of their nation and in the counsels of her lawmakers.

According to an oft-repeated local legend, when the Pettaquamscutt was almost unknown except to the deer and the wild-fowl, or the red men that sought them there, a hunted refugee with a price on his head found a hiding-place in that secluded spot. He was unlike

THE BATHING BEACH AT NARRAGANSETT PIER. THE SMALL BUILDING ON THE EXTREME LEFT IS THE U. S. LIFE-SAVING STATION, AND NEXT TO IT THE NOW RUINED CASINO

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the ordinary pioneer, the hardy and adventurous frontiersman, who, in romance at least, chafes under the approach of civilisation and thinks his neighbourhood crowded if someone settles within fifty miles of him. The legendary hermit of the Pettaquamscutt was an Englishman of elevated social rank, a kinsman of Cromwell, a soldier and legislator.

Once, when fortune had seemed most fair to Edward Whalley, she had exalted him to his ruin, for he had sat in judgment upon a King, and when the son of Charles Stuart returned to England's throne, all the world knew that the regicide judges were marked for vengeance.

Upon the restoration of Charles II, in 1660, some of the judges were seized and executed, but three of them, Whalley, his son-in-law Goffe, and Colonel John Dixwell, escaped to America. The two first mentioned stayed for a while in Boston, but when it was understood there that they had not been included in the decree of pardon, they were obliged to fly. They went, according to one story, first to New Haven, where they lived for three years in a cave, but were at last discovered by some Indians and again driven to seek a new hiding-place. There is a cherished belief in Hadley, that they were received by the Rev. Mr. Russell of that place, and by him concealed in an apartment in his house, from which they could escape to the cellar by a secret way. In that refuge, the antiquaries of Hadley affirm that these fugitives stayed sixteen years, at the

end of which time, Whalley, a broken old man, his wits almost gone, sickened and died. Letters written from Goffe to his wife, who was Whalley's daughter, are quoted in support of this story. Some years ago, it is said that a vault was discovered close to the cellar wall of Mr. Russell's house and in it bones that were believed to be those of the unfortunate regicide.

After Whalley's death, Goffe is supposed to have left that Hadley refuge to go south, but what befell him no one has ever learned. While the pair were in hiding at Mr. Russell's, Colonel Dixwell visited them—he was another of those, upon whose heads Charles had put a price—but he went away and appeared subsequently in New Haven, where, under an assumed name, he married and lived without molestation.

One tradition is good until another is told, and sometimes afterwards. The legend that has established Edward Whalley by the bank of the Pettaquamscutt is as persistent as that which makes him an inmate of Mr. Russell's house at Hadley. The two are not necessarily irreconcilable, as even Goffe's letter, announcing his death, may have been a blind to cover his retreat to another hiding-place, and to the unbiassed mind the discovery of a grave near Mr. Russell's house proves absolutely nothing.

In the early days of the Narragansett Colony, there was one John Whalley, a notary or justice, as there was also a man who called himself William Jefferay, to whom, for many years, the popular gossip of Newport

and Narragansett assigned the perilous character of regicide. It is not impossible that from some such composite source, the legend of Edward Whalley's presence near Pettaquamscutt may have grown. It seems certain that the Narragansett claimant lived to an age even exceeding four score, and married in that country, leaving children who have passed on to their descendants, as a family heirloom, the faith in their father's grim celebrity.

The neighbourhood we are considering has also been famous for its population of unique ghosts. There is one grewsome old story connected with Pettaquamscutt Cove, at a point where long ago lived a woman known as Miss Mumford. She possessed a sharp tongue and used it with such effect, that people in the vicinity were a little careful about provoking its attacks. One day a saucy negro boy displeased the good lady and was so vigorously berated that he went away with revengeful thoughts towards her. Watching his chance upon the following day, while the object of his hatred was knitting by her front door, he stole upon her with a club and killed her. To conceal his crime, the murderer took the body of his victim to the Cove, and, having weighted it with stones, sank it and went away quite satisfied that he had effectually prevented detection. It chanced however that when Black Jim's club struck down Miss Mumford, her knitting fell to the ground, and it also happened that the ball of yarn which supplied her needles was all the while reposing

in her pocket. By and by, when she was missed, the unfinished knitting was found by the chair where she had sat and the clue of yarn led unbroken to the ball which was still in Miss Mumford's pocket at the bottom of the Cove. Whether the negro, Jim, confessed, or was convicted on circumstantial evidence I cannot say, but this, as a recorder of legends as well as sober historical facts, I may state upon hearsay evidence,—the ghost of old Miss Mumford, with an unfinished piece of knitting in her hands, and her lips moving in inaudible animadversions, still wanders by the border of Pettaquamscutt Cove.

Not only does Miss Mumford's ghost enliven the night-watches about Pettaquamscutt. There is a little valley called Dorothy's Hollow, a short distance from the Cove, and there, it is said, that an Indian squaw, named Dorothy by her English acquaintances, was lost in the great snow-storm of 1780. Her spirit also is restless. A short distance beyond Dorothy's Hollow, the Crying Bog used to be avoided by every man, woman, and child for miles around, because of the wailing, ghostly voices that haunted it. It had its story of tragedy, this place of lamentations: long years ago an Indian woman, who lived near the bog, was driven to madness by some wrong or cruelty. Some say that a faithless white lover was the cause of her affliction; others, that the brutality of her Indian husband drove her out of her wits. Whatever the cause, the poor demented creature took her two children to the bog

and buried them in its quaking bosom; then, night after night, as long as she lived, she stood wringing her hands and mourning over their grave. As long as she lived—and for long years afterwards—her pitiful cries rose through the chill, misty, night air that lay upon the marsh. There are a few superstitious people, whose opinions do not carry any great weight, who cling to the idea that that poor ghost is not yet laid.

Once, all of the Narragansett shore was full of occult influences and presences, many of them derived, no doubt, from the aboriginal inhabitants. There were fairies on the hills, and ghosts in the by-ways, and witches as wise as any that ever rode a broom-stick in Salem or New Haven. There was old Sylvia Torry, who, we are informed, was a noted negress witch, who told fortunes in the region round about South Kingstown. Many of the stories told about her are full as marvellous as those generally told about wise women, from the days of the Hag of Endor to Mother Shipton. On one occasion, when a young man came to her to have his fortune told, she refused to make a prediction, and her silence assumed an ominous import when the young man died a few days afterwards.

Thomas R. Hazard (Shepherd Tom) says: "The prophetess Jemima Wilkinson, 'Universal Friend,' and founder of a sect known as 'United Friends,' lived at Judge William Potter's big house, called the 'Old Abbey,' that stood since my remembrance on the east side of the road leading north from Little Rest Hill

(now Kingston). This prophetess wrote a book of some ninety odd pages before she removed to East Greenwich, and afterwards to parts unknown."

The author just quoted has given in his chatty and delightfully humorous *Johnny Cake Papers*, a description of one of the haunts of the ubiquitous Captain Kidd.

> As every informed man and woman knows, the old Thomas B. Hazard big house that lately stood on the east side of the old mill pond (now the Wakefield mill pond) was in the olden time a great resort for the pirates that used to infest the American and West Indian seas, among whom was Captain Kidd. . . . I remember seeing a great hole in the Wilson woods, where, it was said guided by a dream, old Jim Wilson got a heap of gold, and so on the next day old Richard Cory instead of going to work to my grandfather's, posted himself to old Paris Gardner's, and told him that he too had a dream and had dug down in a place till he reached the nigger's bones that old Capt. Kidd had buried with a keg of gold, and being afraid to touch said bones he had come to get old Paris to go with him to Wilson's woods and get the gold, promising to give him half of the kegful if he would just go down with him that night and take the nigger's bones from off the top of it.

The end of this adventure, in which dreams and digging are so curiously mixed, Shepherd Tom omitted to relate, being himself somewhat of a practical joker.

As every one knows—every one, that is, who is familiar with the constitution of Rhode Island—the official title of the commonwealth has always been, "The State of Rhode Island and the Providence Plantations." Originally the Colony consisted of the four towns, Providence, Portsmouth, Newport and Warwick,

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which were settled in the order in which they are named, in 1636, 1638, 1639, and 1642, respectively. Until 1647, each town was governed independently. The situation of each is plainly designated upon the map to-day, but where, asks the enquirer after truth, are the Providence Plantations? Except for that preamble to the constitution and certain legal forms, they have no existence. Of their rival plantations, those of the Narragansett country, there is still a remnant and a reminder. They were unequalled in Rhode Island in their day, both for their extent and for the unique society that developed upon them. Dividing that fertile territory that lies to the west of Narragansett Bay, in what was King's and is now Washington County, they were principalities, the extent of which was measured, not by acres, but by miles. The estate of Richard Smith comprised about twenty-seven square miles. Robert Hazard, one of the great proprietors, had under cultivation a tract containing twelve thousand acres, while not a few of his neighbours were the proprietors of equally large holdings. Let it not be supposed that these great planters were simply the nominal lords of a wilderness, over the forests and streams of which they might hunt or fish after the modern method. The plantations were under cultivation, their products as famous throughout the country for excellence as the houses of their lords were for luxury.

The labour upon the great Narragansett estates was performed for the most part by Indians and negro

slaves. I have elsewhere spoken particularly of the slave trade, that was one of the lucrative industries of Rhode Island. Slave labour was as much a part of Rhode Island life as it was of Virginia life at that day, and the effort that has sometimes been made to gloss it over or make little of it, is unworthy of any careful historian.

Slavery in Rhode Island was in many respects a more "peculiar institution" than elsewhere in the American Colonies. The slaves were allowed certain privileges that in time led to curious embarrassments. There was one day of the year that was set apart for what was commonly known as "nigger election" and upon that day the black people enjoyed a liberty that I believe was without parallel in any part of the world. From far and near the slaves gathered at Kingston, or some other central place, to elect a Governor—a negro Governor—for themselves, and this personage, while he had no actual authority nor legal status, yet enjoyed an almost unbounded influence over the people of his own colour, and was the referee in most of their private differences. At the election the negroes assumed for the time the importance of their masters and supported the dignity of their exalted "families" in very much the same way that the great planters themselves would have done. John, or Peter, or Sambo, was arrayed in fine clothing, furnished by his owner, he was permitted to ride his master's horse and provided with money to fling about as befitted a gentleman of property and

rank. The election feast became in time a very sumptuous and exceedingly expensive function, the races and games that followed rivalled those of the white people, ostentation was the order of the day—and the masters of those who revelled footed the bills. In time this absurd festival, the extravagance of which was somehow supposed to reflect credit upon the planters, became a real burden to many a slave-owner. The wealth of the planters was mainly in lands and personal property and though they had more cash than most Americans of their day, yet the longest purse was not by any means limitless. It is told that one great landowner, whose personal campaign expenses had been somewhat huge, had a slave who had stood as a gubernatorial candidate at the nigger election. The white man called the black one into his office and said, thoughtfully: "John, these elections are costing me too much. One or the other of us will have to give up politics."

In 1730 South Kingstown contained 965 whites, 333 negroes, and 193 Indians. A few years later, though the population had increased, the proportion remained nearly the same. A good evidence of the presence of numerous slaves is found in the stringent slave laws that were enacted, though many of these in time became practically a dead letter. "No negroes or Indians, freemen or slaves," we read, "are to be abroad at night on penalty of not exceeding fifteen stripes." No housekeeper might entertain a negro slave without consent of the owner first received. No housekeeper

might suffer any servant or slave to have any kind of dancing, gaming, or diversion of any kind, under penalty of fifty pounds or one month's imprisonment. If the host in such a case were a free negro, he or she should no longer be permitted to keep house, but should be dispossessed "and shall be put into some private family to do work for his living for the space of one year, the wages accruing by said service to be for the benefit of the town."

There were by-laws enacted in Kingstown that provided among other things for the whipping of both slave and free negroes, if one of the latter class was found to have entertained one of the former. No goods could be sold to a slave without his master's permission and on no condition could liquor, even cider, be sold to a bond servant. No negro, whether slave or free, was permitted in the middle of the Eighteenth century to own any live stock of any description, under penalty of thirty-one lashes.

The first movement towards freeing the slaves in Rhode Island, seems to have been made by Thomas Hazard, better known as "College Tom." Influenced somewhat by Berkeley, and partly by the sneer of a Connecticut antagonist, who told him flatly that the Quakers were not Christians because they kept slaves, this one of the great landowners declared in early life against the practice of owning human property and became one of the very first American abolitionists. His father, Robert, whose wealth was partly in slaves, and

whose farms were made profitable by slave labor, endeavoured to turn his son from such pestilent notions, and finally threatened to disinherit him, but the young man kept to his creed and began to cultivate his acres with free labour.

The freeing of slaves by individual owners seems to have caused not a little trouble to the community, and in 1729 it was enacted by the Assembly that a "sufficent security be given to the town treasurer, of the town or place where such a person dwells (that is one who manumitted a mulatto or negro slave) in a valuable sum of not less than £100, to secure and indemnify the town from all charge." From this extract it appears that there were crafty people who sometimes freed a slave when his services no longer balanced the expense of his maintenance and left the community to shoulder the burden.

There were white bond servants who were not commonly called slaves, though to all intents they were so. These were indentured for a term of years and could be transferred, but their offspring were free.

Among the Friends, who set their faces against much of the frivolity that distinguished their neighbours, and who discountenanced "vain music and dancing" at weddings, there grew in time a firm opposition to slavery. The great fight made by the Providence Society against the slave trade was largely urged by Quakers.

It is curious to note the hard logic with which for

many years the Narragansett slave-holders treated their human property. As they were bought and worked as cattle, therefore they must be treated as cattle in respect to their souls. It would clearly be impious to permit the baptism of a slave as it would be to have the same solemn religious ceremony performed for an ox or a horse. Doctor McSparran and Dean Berkeley took the matter in hand and convinced the pious masters that there was a flaw in their logic, and comforted the souls of many black servants by administering the sacred rite.

One of the great characters in the earlier colonial days in Rhode Island, was the lively and popular Irish divine, Doctor McSparran, who was sent to these wild shores by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. When he arrived he complained of the various non-conforming sects "Quakers, Anabaptists of four sorts, Independents" and declared that "Here liberty of conscience is carried to an irreligious extreme." Then too the great Berkeley visited this country and stayed two years at Newport, leaving a strong impression upon the intellectual life of the colony. To both Berkeley and McSparran we are indebted for much light upon the life of the Rhode Islanders of that day.

Doctor Channing, in his paper on the Narragansett Planters, calls attention to the fact that the great landowners of that country were not planters in the sense that the great landed proprietors of the South were.

"The Narragansett wealth was derived not so much from the cultivation of any great staple such as tobacco, cane, or cotton, as from the product of their dairies, their flocks of sheep, and their droves of splendid horses, the once famous Narragansett pacers."

The fame of the Narragansett pacers was not confined to the American Colonies. From the West Indies there were standing orders for all the animals of this strain that could be procured, and not a few were taken to the old country. So great was the speed of the Narragansett pacer that he could out-travel all other horses, his gait was so perfect that when at highest speed he could carry a pail of water on his back without spilling a drop, and his endurance was so great that he could travel a hundred miles without rest and without fatigue to himself or his rider: these are some of the marvels recorded of this most astonishing horse. It is said that the Revolutionary War so broke up the breeding farms, and that the destruction of horses by the British was so great, that in the year 1800 there was but one member of this famous stock left in Rhode Island. In Newport, while General Prescott was in command there, a Quaker gentleman who owned a very fine team of pacers offended the military autocrat by not lifting his hat in obeisance. Prescott ordered his servant to "knock off that old rebel's hat," and the very next day he sent for the Quaker's horses, which were ridden without rest till one at last was exhausted and was found by his master dying at the roadside.

This story, which seems to be well founded, may indicated what became of the Narragansett pacers.

"It has been claimed that the progenitors of the Narragansett farmers were superior in birth and breeding to other New England colonists," says Channing, and adds, "I do not find this to have been the case." Those who by the middle of the Eighteenth century had become the leaders in the King's Province, were for the most part much more highly educated than their fathers, a fact which does the fathers great credit, as it indicates their appreciation of learning that they themselves did not possess. The Updykes, Fayerweathers, Robinsons, and others of that day, were men of culture and scholarship. The hill known as McSparran's, not far from Boston Neck, perpetuates the name of one of the intellectual men of the middle colonial period.

I have elsewhere spoken of Boston Neck, the rich strip of shore between the Pettaquamscutt River and the Bay, and north of the inlet. It was part of the great Brinley tract, and was purchased from Francis Brinley, Esquire, and Dame Deborah his wife, in 1738, at about twenty-nine dollars an acre. The buyer, Thomas Hazard, was not only a man of substance and importance in the Colony, but of learning and cultivation.

Isaac Peter Hazard has stated, on the authority of his grandmother, that her father, Robert Hazard, kept one hundred and fifty cows, with twelve women and their helpers in the dairy, from which was turned out

from twelve to twenty-four cheeses a day. He kept four thousand sheep, maufacturing both woollen and linen clothing for his household. When he wished to retire from active farming and retrench his expenses,

OLD APPLE ORCHARD ON BOSTON NECK

he congratulated himself upon having cut down his household to "only seventy in parlour and kitchen."

In relation to the transmission of property, if a man died intestate, the English law of primogeniture was in force, and where a will was made there was usually a preference given to the eldest son. Furthermore, no

man's real estate could be attached for debt, so long as he was an actual resident of Rhode Island. These things all conspired to keep the great properties intact for a great many years, in spite of the rapidly increasing population.

Only a man of "competent estate" could become a freeman and have a voice in town or county affairs. This rule dates back to 1663. In 1729 it was further enacted that the possession of a freehold of the value of £200 was a necessary qualification for an elector. Only the eldest son of a freeholder could exercise the franchise without a property qualification. Such laws, discriminating as they did in favour of the freeholder, conspired with the social distinction and wealth of the Narragansett proprietors to foster an aristocracy that was without parallel in the colonies north of the Potomac.

The people of this Colony were sprung from dissenters of every degree. There were Puritans, Separatists, Baptists, and Quakers, but finally, in the course of years, the Episcopal Church became more prominent, suiting better, perhaps, the growing aristocratic tendency. Most of the original Pettaquamscutt purchasers were Congregationalists. The Robinsons, Hazards, and others were Quakers, or Friends as they preferred to be called. Both Baptists and Presbyterians had churches in Kingstown as early as the year 1700. Among all these people of various sects there were a number of French Huguenots, who left their native

country upon the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. These had first settled in Massachusetts, and afterwards, under the leadership of Ezechiel Carré, Peter le Breton, and others, obtained a tract of land "above ye long meadow called Kickameeset, about Captain John Fones his house, wherein each family y^{t} desires it shall have one hundred acres of land," etc. A copy of the agreement binding the transfer of this property was signed in 1686 by Wharton, Hutchinson, and Saffin, for the proprietors, that is to say, the Atherton Company. To purchase land of the Atherton Company was to buy a quarrel and endless litigation. The deeds of the poor French emigrants were in question from the very first, till the final decision was made by the courts against the Atherton land claim, but as the descendants of many of those Frenchmen are still in the land, we must conjecture that the matter was in some way adjusted and the Huguenot titles secured.

When one gets gossiping with old records it is impossible not to stray into by-paths. Let us go back for a moment to that Thomas Hazard, "yeoman," who lived upon Boston Neck and added to his father's possessions till he became one of the great landed proprietors of the country. Part of his property he bought from Judge Sewall, whose wife Hannah was a daughter of John Hull. It is told, that when she was married, her father weighed her against a pile of "pine-tree shillings" till she was fairly balanced. As the lady was plump, her dower was, for that day, considerable.

The deed of sale made out by Sewall and his wife was witnessed before John Whalley, whose name, as suggested, has possibly contributed to the local legend connecting Edward Whalley, the regicide, with the Narragansett country.

One may hardly overestimate the luxury and the hospitality of the people who inhabited the Narragansett country before modern influences began to be felt. There was, if not a leisure class, at least a class of frank and rich country-gentlemen whose lives were not hardened by too much toil and who had time and inclination to cultivate certain social instincts and customs that in time they cherished as hereditary. The Narragansett planter loved to do things upon a large scale, hating as unworthy of his traditions whatever was mean or niggardly. His inclination was towards out-of-door sports and occupations, yet he did not neglect those gracious observances that marked the fine gentleman of his day. He cherished a becoming pride in all that belonged to him, was a most bountiful provider and kept open house for all whose social rank entitled them to sit at his board. With all his pride, his lavish living, his comfortable fortune and valued possessions, the gentleman of the Providence plantations was hearty and generous rather than ostentatious, and above all things on earth he loved a practical joke.

The education of children was not neglected by the Narragansett planters. The best tutors were imported to the Colony and the stripling was prepared either for

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one of the infant colleges of our own land or for some more pretentious seat of letters in the old world.

In a typical country-house of the period there was always ample space for the reception of half the country-side. An army of cousins, to the sixth degree (and every one was kin to his neighbour in old King's Province) might gather for a romping dance and feast afterwards to heart's content without crowding. The great annual festival was that of Christmas, not observed by more puritanical colonists in New England, but made much of by the Rhode Islanders. The merrymaking lasted a week and resembled the traditional Christmas of old England, when England found time and inclination to be merry.

Even exceeding the mirth and conviviality of the Christmas festivities were the ardour and gaiety with which Narragansett society celebrated a wedding. That delightful combination of serious ceremony and unbounded hilarity taxed even the generous dimensions of a Narragansett manor-house and strained the resources of a Narragansett larder. The people, from far and near, feasted and made merry for days and went home to treasure the recollection as one might remember a coronation. There is a record of a wedding entertainment given by Nicholas Gardner, in 1790, at which there were present six hundred guests.

Among the dances fashionable at that day the minuet, with its stately grace, led the list, but there were others, the figures of which have long been forgotten, though

their names suggest something livelier and more romping than the minuet. There for instance were Pea Straw, Boston's Delight, Haymaking, Lady Hancock, I'll Be Married In My Old Clothes, and others with names equally suggestive of the rollicking jollity of a hearty, wholesome lot of youngsters, among whom a stranger was rarely met.

What halls and parlours those were that could hold such an army of merrymakers; what dining-rooms that might have served for the mess-halls of regiments, and kitchens huge enough to supply the needs of such dining-rooms. Enormous fire-places furnished heat for these great chambers. The logs that fed them were hauled in cord lengths and rested upon great andirons that would alone fill a meagre, modern fire-place. The "fire dogs," as they were called, that furnished the kitchen hearth were provided with turned up lips at convenient intervals, to hold the spit upon which fowl or joint was roasted. The crane hung in the chimney and beside it, built into the chimney wall, was the oven, big enough for a modern bake-shop.

It was no unusual thing then to hang upon the spit for roasting a quarter of lamb or a haunch of venison at the same time that turkeys, ducks, and fowl were being roasted. The food that came upon the planter's table was usually the product of his own prolific acres. If we are to believe the testimony of Rhode Island epicures there were no fruit nor vegetables in the world like Narragansett fruit and vegetables, no corn nor grain

that could compare with Narragansett corn or grain, and no beef nor mutton, pork nor poultry, that were fit to be mentioned in the same day with those grown in that favoured region.

Shepherd Tom—to quote once more from the *Jonny-cake Papers*—avers that

> In the olden time each dish of meat or fowl had its own special proper fixings, which with all good livers were deemed indispensable. Roast beef, for instance, was always accompanied with a Yorkshire pudding and cranberry sauce; roast mutton with currant jelly; boiled mutton with round turnips; roast lamb with mint sauce and green peas; roast veal with horseradish, lemons (if to be had), asparagus and dandelions, the best and wholesomest green in the world if properly boiled with a portion of the root attached. Roast turkey was always attended with boiled rice, onions, and cranberry sauce. The specialties of roast goose and duck were onions and apple sauce, the big cat-head apple being the finest grained, the best and the tartest for the purpose.

Of course every great house had its smoke-houses, its place for grinding the flour and meal and hominy, the dairies where the milk was brought and emptied in great cedar "Keelers," before the days of milk pans, the spinning room where the mother of the household taught her maidens the housewifely arts of the wheel and the loom, and the store-rooms for home-made linen and woollen stuffs. Then a maid wrought with her own fingers the store of household furnishing that grew against the day when she should be mistress of a house of her own.

While the men directed the affairs of the plantation, or arranged trials of speed between the choicest of the

"Narragansett pacers," the women held knitting-bees and rivalled each other in the production of tea-parties that have passed into a glorious tradition. Speaking of knitting-bees it is said that Governor Jonathan Trumbull, of Connecticut—the "Brother Jonathan" of

HAUNTED MILL IN KINGSTOWN

American caricature—came into Kingstown to get from the loyal women there wool mittens for the suffering Continental soldiers at Valley Forge.

In connection with this subject it is of interest to know that the first power loom set up in America, was invented by Thomas R. Williams, of Newport, and was run in an old oil mill at Peacedale. Four of these

machines were finally running at that place and turned out a hundred yards of linen a day, from flax grown in Rhode Island. This was in 1814 or 1815 About 1797, one of the Hazard's commenced the manufacture of linsey woolsey with wool brought by sailing vessels from Charleston, S. C. The manufacture of woollens was commenced in Peacedale in 1814, at which time wages were paid in kind, that is, in goods or provisions, at the rate of six or eight dollars a month and board. Thomas R. Hazard says:

> When I first began to manufacture I used to carry for years and years wool rolls about the country, to be spun upon hand wheels, then bring the yarn home and carry it to old Rit Perry to be scoured, and then again carry the yarn to Aser Stedman's to be colored, and then again bring the cloth home and all this on horseback. How many thousands of miles I have ridden in that way, with bundles of rolls and yarn on each side and before me, through sunshine, rain, snow, and storm, over bogs, stone walls, rocks, swamps, and the Devil knows what—it would be hard to tell.

I have spoken of the general relationship existing between the old families of Kingstown. We find the Perrys, Reynolds, Potters, Smiths, Hazards, Saunders, Robinsons, and others, constantly recurring. It has been said that you could not throw a stone within ten miles of Pettaquamscutt without hitting a Hazard. It is said that at one time there were thirty-two Tom Hazard's living in Narragansett. Updike enumerates a few of them as follows: "College Tom Hazard; Bedford Tom—he lived in Bedford; Barley Tom—raised large quantities of barley; Virginia Tom—married from

Virginia; Little Neck Tom—he lived on Little Neck; Nailor Tom—a blacksmith; Rock Tom—from Rocky Farm; Fiddle Head Tom; Pistol Tom; Young Pistol Tom; Derrick Tom; Short Stephen's Tom; Long Stephen's Tom; Tailor Tom; etc." In the Reynolds family there were almost as many Johns as there were Toms among the Hazards. "Squire" Lisha Potter is distinguished as the first man in that country to appear in a four-wheeled carriage, drawn by a span of horses. In this luxurious chariot the Squire drove home from Congress, in which he had represented his neighbours. James Robinson, who brought a wife home from Philadelphia, about 1815, introduced the second four-wheeler into Narragansett. Previous to that time the men had been content to go on horseback, and aged and invalid dames in their journeyings were more than content with the two-wheeled, one-horse chaise.

There is reason to believe that before the advent of the white man these delightful shores were rather more thickly populated by Indians than was the case in most other parts of the country. The Narragansetts were powerful and prosperous and their numbers were not so far as we know depleted by the fearful epidemics that wrought such havoc among the Massachusetts tribes.

It is said that there used to be a stone covert or watch-tower made by these Indians near the Pettaquamscutt and another at about the site of the South Pier. The first of these was destroyed many years ago. The great headquarters of the Narragansetts was,

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however, farther to the south-west, about Charlestown, where the remnant of the tribe has lingered down nearly to the present day. Their last king was quite a noted character, locally. In that vicinity on Burying Hill these Indians had their grave-yard, in which the older graves are said to have been built of stone from top to bottom.

Near Kingston there was a great swamp, not far from Wordon's pond, which is the source of the Pawcatuck River. The great swamp fight of 1675, which I have descibed in another place, occurred here. It was the last stand of the gallant tribesmen under Canonchet when the atrocities committed by the men of Salem and Plymouth excelled in horror the cruelty of the Indians themselves.

The first building put up by a white man in the Narragansett country, we are told, was Smith's block-house, near the present village of Wickford. Through Wickford, Wakefield, and Kingston, the old post-road used to run, the latter named place (formerly called Little Rest) having once been the seat of the State Assembly.

Narragansett Pier is, of course, very modern. Thirty-three years ago there was nothing there but a few buildings near a coal pier and a little straggling village in the neighbourhood. The beach and the rocks were there, a few fishing crafts used to find a harbour in the inlet and perhaps an occasional farmer took a boarder or two.

The first pier was built by John Robinson, a son of

Governor William Robinson, and a thrilling story is told of an adventure that befell the Governor's grandson while the pier was being built. The youngster, whose name was Sylvester, enjoyed swimming near the place where the work was going on. One day, as his father was watching the boy's antics, he saw to his horror the dorsal fin of a large man-eating shark slowly moving towards the unsuspecting swimmer. Realising the great danger there would be in alarming the boy and probably paralysing his strength, Mr. Robinson held up a Spanish silver piece and shouted to his son that he would give him that if he reached the shore in two minutes. Of course, young Robinson made a dash for the unusual prize, the value of which was relatively much higher at that day than it would be at the present. As he lessened the distance between himself and the coveted prize, the shark also seemed to scent prey and moved more swiftly through the water, though not yet fairly upon the boy's track nor exercising his full speed.

The father, by this time almost frantic, saw the shark cutting down the space and moving ever more swiftly, yet he still held up the silver piece and encouraged the boy with such words as he could command to do his best to win the prize.

Just as he caught the breathless lad in his arms and swung him clear of the water the shark turned on his back and made a vicious but futile snap at the disappearing swimmer and then unable to check his own

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headway ran aground in the shoal water and was dispatched by the axes of the carpenters. It is not recorded that Sylvester Robinson indulged his desire for a swim any more at that point. We know that the pier was finished and that it stood for many years, a curious old crib of timber and stone with a derrick atop for hoisting in lumber and coal from the schooners.

Between 1870 and 1880 the Pier had grown from a scattered village to a more compact mushroom town of inns and hotels of all sizes and varying degrees of discomfort. Shingle palaces were run up everywhere and now and then among them appeared more ornate and substantial buildings. The rare beauty of the shore, the salubrious climate and freedom from many of the ills that infest other resorts, brought Narragansett Pier into almost immediate popularity. It became a mint, a gold mine, for those who were first in the field as caterers for the multitude that sought accommodations. Without ever attaining the fashionable rank of Newport, Narragansett Pier has almost without intermission for thirty years held her own among the most popular seaside resorts in America or indeed in the world.

Point Judith has long been a puzzle to etymologists. The natives call it "Pint Judy Pint," but whether or not Judy is an abbreviation of Judith no one has yet determined. There is a legend long repeated in Washington County, that may throw some light upon the subject, though like most mariners' yarns it may appropriately be taken with a grain of salt. The story goes that once

upon a time an old sea captain of Nantucket or thereabouts, took his wife with him upon a voyage along the coast, and being enveloped in a fog he made her lookout. After awhile the woman piped out "land!"

"Whar away?" bellowed her lord.

"Why right over there, just the other side of all those ropes," she answered excitedly.

"T' other side o' fiddlesticks," roared the captain. "Can't you tell me in straight talk, whar away?"

Now it happened that the captain's wife was unacquainted with nautical terms, and while she could do many useful things she could no more have boxed the compass than she could have flown, so presently another order came from the impatient steersman:

"Pint! Judy, pint!"

Then Judy "pinted," and the shore she had discovered and indicated was ever afterwards known as Pint Judy Pint.

There are those who say that the point was named after the wife of Mintmaster John Hull, of Boston, whose name chanced to be Judith; but other wiseacres claim that the earlier maps do not show Judith, but Juda or Judah. It is true that many of the well known landmarks about Narragansett Bay have either had their names greatly modified or changed by careless usage, or else the cartographers have been frequently inaccurate in their spelling of place names. Gould Island, for example, appears as Gold Island in an old chart; Spar Island, so called, in Mount Hope Bay, was and is still

put down on the maps as Sparrow Island; the Providence River was formerly Prudence River, and Dutch Island appeared a hundred years ago as Duck Island. These are a few of many cases where old charts and modern usage are at variance.

Chapter X

Ghosts at Newport

THE shore side of Newport is a combination of weather-stained age and unmitigated brand-newness. One explores its narrow streets, that seem to have been preserved with all their distinctive eighteenth-century landmarks, unspoiled by time or carpenters, to issue upon avenues bordered with modern parks and palaces. The oldest street in town is still the busiest, and a motley crowd, such as may not be found upon any other thoroughfare in the country, throngs this one. There are sailors of all nationalities, from merchantmen, private yachts, and men-of-war; gazing, hurrying, loitering, jabbering. There go a company of marines, keeping a tolerable formation under difficulties; they work their way like a shuttle from side to side through a throng of officers, yachtsmen, loungers, hucksters, women, and children. Ladies intent upon their marketing or shopping, maids not unconscious of the notice of youthful blue-jackets, people of all degrees upon all sorts of errands, overrun the inadequate sidewalk and share the road with the few vehicles that chance to crawl that way.

The houses that enclose this ancient street are for the most part small and unpretentious, but attractive to the architect or the antiquary. Many of them have old-fashioned doors, occasionally adorned with side lights, upper balconies give an old world aspect to the scene, and gambrel roofs are ornamented with antique gables. Though not to be compared in beauty with many of the old houses of Bristol, these of Thames Street suggest a greater antiquity. Many of them present the gable end to the street, and there are still in places suggestions of old-fashioned gardens behind their walls.

The reason for the narrowness of Thames Street is to be found in the fact that when it was laid out the houses were all upon the upper side, that is to say, the side farthest from the water, and the public thoroughfare which ran by their very doors was supposed to be over one hundred feet in width, the water front for each house lying upon the opposite side of the street. A gentleman of the day might sit on his front porch and observe all that took place on land or water. The final defeat of this pleasant arrangement was caused by the house-holders themselves; as they, being merchants, found it convenient at first to build wharves for their vessels, and then to erect buildings for their merchandise, so obstructing their view of the harbour. Gradually the buildings upon the lower side of the street crowded more and more, till it has become one of the narrowest in New England. There can be little doubt that the water front at present is much of it made-

ground, and that the wharves of to-day stretch much farther into the harbour than did those of an earlier time.

The expense of paving Thames Street in 1768 was defrayed by the establishment of a lottery, called the Thames Street Lottery, and authorized by the Assembly. As is well known, the consciences of our great-grandfathers found nothing objectionable in a lottery, and more than one list of the patrons of this once popular form of gambling was headed with the honoured name of Washington. Hospitals, galleries, colleges, and even churches were built with funds raised by that method.

William Coddington, John Coggeshall, Nicholas Easton, William Brenton, John Clarke, Jeremy Clerke, Henry Bull, and Thomas Hazard, with William Dyer as clerk, were the founders of Newport. Because of the stand taken by some of them in the Ann Hutchinson controversy and for liberal views which they held in dissent from the rulings of the Massachusetts theocracy, these men were forced out of the older settlement and set forth to establish in the wilderness a community where men might be free to think and to worship without molestation.

Their first idea was to travel to Delaware, favourable reports of that fertile country having reached New England, but having halted for a little while at Providence they were strongly urged by Roger Williams to consider Aquidneck, which, he pointed out to them, had every advantage possessed by the more distant region towards which they had set their faces.

The first settlement made by these men and their companions was Pocasset (Portsmouth), where they stayed for a year. Then the leaders went to mark out the site for a town upon the southern end of the island, forseeing the advantage for trade that its excellent position offered. Like all the early Rhode Island towns, except Bristol, Newport was founded in dissent. Her first settlers were for the most part remarkable men and worthy of more than a passing notice. I propose presently to give an account of several of them.

In May, 1639, Mr. Jeffrey, William Dyer, and John Clarke were empowered by the company to lay out the ground for the town to be called Newport. Previous to that, however, an amusing incident occurred in connection with clearing the site of the future town. There were hollows so choked with bushes and undergrowth that the pioneers looked at them in despair of ever getting rid of the encumbrance. Tradition says that when, with great reluctance, they were about to abandon the place, an Indian offered to clear the ground for a coat with brass buttons, the same being worn by Mr. Coddington. One is seldom in dire need of a coat at Newport and the leader readily promised to close the bargain. To his chagrin the Indian took the obvious method of burning the brush and in a few hours came to claim his award.

William Coddington, the first of the Newport colonists in influence and distinction, was a man of no small importance in the colony from which he had been invited

to depart. That he enjoyed a greater proportion of worldly goods than fell to the share of most of the exiles, is shown by the greater costliness of his dwellings, as well as by the traditions concerning his style of living. Evidently a gentleman of high birth, he brought into the wilderness an escutcheon bearing the coat-of-arms of his family, which is even now preserved in the city he helped to found. The house he left in Boston was the first brickhouse ever built in that colony.

In 1640, he was chosen Governor of the united colony of Newport and Portsmouth. He stood at that time rather as the representative of the aristocratic element in the settlement, as opposed to the more democratic section. In one essential particular, Newport and Providence were as far apart as the poles: in the former place the controlling influence was that of the eighteen men of standing, some of them of cultivation, who were the leaders of the exodus. In the latter, Roger Williams, with one or two supporters, tried often vainly to stem the tide of lawlessness that his fellow-colonists too frequently confounded with liberty.

At one time, when the prosperity of the Aquidneck colony seemed to be assured, Coddington tried to obtain and did actually secure for a time, a personal grant giving him a power at least equal to that of the "Patroons" on the Hudson River. That his fellow townsmen resented this and succeeded in having the patent rescinded, and that they afterwards forgave him

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SEA WALL AT NEWPORT. FROM THE CLIFF WALK

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and elected him again as their Governor, are matters of history.

John Clarke should perhaps rank next to Roger Williams as the citizen to whom Rhode Island owed most in her formative years. He obtained the great charter which was the basis of Rhode Island's government for one hundred and eighty years, and which remained in force after the Colony became a State, down to 1843, the date of the adoption of the present constitution, at which time it was referred to as the oldest constitutional charter in existence. Of it the great Stephen Hopkins said: "It doubtless contained more liberal provisions than did any similar instrument ever granted by a monarch."

Rhode Island's first patent was granted in 1639–47, through the strenuous exertions of Roger Williams; the second was won by the no less remarkable exertions of John Clarke, and subsequently, during the famous boundary disputes in which Massachusetts and Connecticut strove to reduce Rhode Island to nothing between them, he remained in London, fighting almost single-handed for the rights of his fellow-colonists against a combination of wealth, ability, and influence. It is not a small matter to record that he won his fight.

John Coggeshall, who like most of his companions earned the animosity of the Massachusetts elders by his attempted interference in the trial of Ann Hutchinson, was first Moderator of the first Colonial Assembly of Rhode Island. In 1682 we find him appointed Major

of a militia company of cavalry for the Island. He was elected to succeed Coddington at Portsmouth when the latter went to found Newport and, by the way, took the offices and records with him.

William Brenton was another man of substance who served the colony in several public offices. He was President under the old patent, from 1660 till 1662, and second Governor under the Charles II. charter, serving from 1666 to 1669. For the three years previous to this term he had been Deputy-Governor to Benedict Arnold. Brenton's name is a familiar one, from its association with the Cape or "Neck" in which Aquidneck terminates, as well as with that dangerous shoal known as Brenton's Reef, where for many years a light-ship has been stationed.

A history of Brenton's Neck was printed in the Newport *Mercury* in 1853 and afterwards reprinted in 1877 in a little volume, the edition being limited to twenty-five copies. This rare and valuable monograph, the material for which was largely gathered from journals left by Benjamin Brenton, furnishes much interesting matter not elsewhere obtainable. I have drawn from this source among others for the following account.

Brenton's Neck, as the peninsular which forms so important a portion of Newport is called, was the estate of William Brenton. Its northern boundary ran in a straight line east from the "Lime Rocks," and upon all other sides was the sea-shore. The Neck included altogether over two thousand acres "of the richest soil

and presenting the most picturesque scenery, diversified with hills, valleys, bays, and ponds, fields adorned with the most luxurious grass, jutting rocks fringed with rich foliage, mingled with wild flowers; trees of superior growth, the hemlock, spruce, and cedar, the oak, maple, and chestnut, crowned the summit of the hills; and east of the little cove shadows of the majestic oak were oft reflected in the mirrored surface which smoothly rested around the rocky base that sustained them."

William Brenton's house was built of brick brought from Boston, and was distinguished by having four chimneys, an architectural feature that gave the place its popular name, "The Chimneys." The fact that the date upon one of the chimneys of this mansion was 1638 gives one a curious feeling that possibly some details of history should be re-written. 1638 was the year of Brenton's banishment, when he and his wife moved to Rhode Island; consequently a year earlier than the laying out of Newport.

Coddington, Coggeshall, William Baulston, Edward Hutchinson, Samuel Wilbor, John Porter, Henry Bull, Philip Sherman, William Freeborn, and Richard Carden, the associates of Brenton, while not actually banished from Massachusetts, were warned either to depart or to appear in court to answer objections against them by opponents who could by no means be brought to listen to their arguments or condone their Antinomian heresy. The order "permitting" the fathers of Newport to depart from Massachusetts was equivalent to

banishment and is usually referred to by that term. A matter which affords some food for thought is that one of the exiles, in the very year of his expatriation, should have built a house palatial for that day and place, a "four chimney" house, of material brought from the Colony from which he had been invited to emigrate. I am inclined to believe that the date upon the chimney did not indicate the year of the erection of the house but rather was intended to commemorate the family exodus. The mansion in question was one hundred and fifty feet square, with a hall sixteen feet wide running through the centre of it. The roof was a flat deck, with seats, promenade, and railing.

It seems evident from many circumstances that the Rhode Island settlers brought with them their worldly goods without molestation, and that the Puritans of the Bay, though averse to being contaminated by their precepts or example, made no objection to communicating in the way of trade, and received as welcome customers the men that they refused to cherish as neighbours and for whom they kept the scaffold in repair.

One thing should be clearly understood: the Aquidneck settlers were not a poor starveling band. They were, not a few of them, men of wealth, and they brought their wealth with them.

Brenton's place was divided into the east and west farms, under one name of Hammersmith, after his home in England. Around his house old-time gardens

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and orchards "fruited deep," while groups of the great forest trees were left to break the otherwise uninterrupted view of sky and ocean. Along the shores and between the hills native small fruits and many wild flowers grew in abundance. In that wonderful climate, since become world-famous, roses and the rarer garden beauties from the old world flourished in rich profusion between formal borders of box. Roads were laid out to the different parts of the Neck and buildings erected for the shelter of flocks and herds and the convenience of dependents. Price's Neck was the site of a small house built by Brenton for the family shoemaker, imported (it was before the importation of contract labour was banned) from England. Here also the gentlemen of Newport were wont at a time to come for the excellent shooting and fishing, the Neck being a famous ground for teal, canvas-back, and other birds. Deer abounded in the woods and sometimes the settlers found difficulty with less gentle neighbours.

On Rocky Farm, as his son Jahleel called the east farm, William Brenton built a small house for his herdsmen, for he had at one time, besides horses and cattle, eleven thousand sheep. Down by the Point where Fort Adams now is, there was no attempt at cultivation, as for many years the marshy nature of the soil made it nearly valueless to the planter.

The election of William Brenton to the Presidency of the Colony, in May, 1660, occurred just before the restoration of the house of Stuart to the British throne

and previous to the granting of the second, or Charles II. charter. The news of the downfall of the Protectorate and the entrance of the King into London did not reach the Colony till the eighteenth of the following October, five months after the event. Brenton, as President, sitting with the Board of Commissioners at Warwick at that time, ordered a day of thanksgiving to be observed in each town in the Colony, and—boon never to be forgotten by the children and servants—processions with music. What delectable music it must have been. The sackbut and psaltery, ram's-horn and dulcimer, the high sounding cymbals, and all the obsolete musical inventions of Israel, could hardly have discoursed stranger or wilder music than did the fiddles, horns, kettle-drums, and fifes, in the hands of the unskilled negroes, as they paraded the newly laid out streets of Portsmouth, Warwick, Little Rest, or Newport.

In the centre of one procession Cromwell, represented in effigy, was escorted by Satan, whose hand firmly clutched the wig of the late Protector, while some patriotic elocutionist spouted the following poetic stanza:

> Old Cromwell, man, your time has come,
> We tell it here with fife and drum;
> And Satan's hand is on your head,
> He 's come for you before you 'r dead,
> And on his spear he 'll throw you in
> The very worst place that ever was seen,
> For good King Charles is on his throne
> And Parliament and you 'll let him alone.

Bonfires were kindled on many hills and points, and whoever hesitated to celebrate the restoration wisely kept his political heresies to himself.

Brenton's will furnishes an instructive inventory of the property of a well-to-do-colonist of the first generation of Englishmen in America. It includes six or eight farms, besides other parcels of realty, more than a dozen houses, live stock upon each farm, besides seventy or more horses, thirty-four or more head of cattle, and eleven thousand sheep: the total valuation being equivalent to over fifty thousand dollars, a good fortune for that day. On Brenton's Neck the British soldiers were stationed. There they cut down the forest trees, a noble grove of oaks included, and made the beautiful park and farms a desolate waste: there, when they were leaving, they burned their barracks.

It was on Brenton's Neck, speaking of trees, that the first Rhode Island greening apple tree matured, and here also the russet is said to have found its first home upon American soil. One point of land was so covered with luscious cherry trees, planted either by William Brenton or his son Jahleel, that it was called Cherry Neck. Pears, plums, peaches, grapes, in profusion—in fact every fruit known to Europeans of that day—were cultivated successfully upon ground that now is occupied by imposing modern residences, and beautified (though the process suggests painting the lily) by the hand of the landscape gardener.

The second owner of the Hammersmith house of the

four chimneys was active during the Indian troubles in affording a refuge for the homeless victims of savage warfare. After trying in vain to rouse the authorities of Newport to take defensive measures, Jahleel Brenton removed to Boston, where he remained for several years, till sent to England as an envoy from that colony. Later he filled the office of London agent for Rhode Island, and at last returned to America as tax commissioner.

A description of Newport given by Jahleel Brenton pictures an almost ideal settlement. It was increasing in population, the people were prosperous and no one was unemployed. Business was the "moving spring among all classes of people." There were no drinking-places, gambling-houses, or other evil resorts; intemperance was unknown; there were no poor, and the prison was almost unused. The business men of the place generally relaxed from toil during the afternoon, and it was customary for the leading citizens to enter each other's houses, or sit at each other's tables "like brothers, without ceremony."

Another of the company who came out with the Newport settlers was William Dyer, clerk, whose wife Mary was afterwards executed in Boston—murdered, as George Fox said, for her faith. He was a man of prominence in the colony and filled at one time the office of General Recorder. There are many of his descendants in the State to-day. Robert Hazard afterwards went into the Narragansett country and has

almost as many descendants as Abraham, whom he also resembled in his general account of flocks and herds. They were a rare company, these old founders, whose names should be honoured in Rhode Island's temple of fame. Their rich domain of Aquidneck they bought for a song—forty fathoms of white wampum paid to the former Indian owners and perhaps a consideration to the agents who secured the sale—though I think that hardly possible, considering that one of these was Roger Williams and the other Sir Harry Vane.

The first industry of importance to occupy the attention of the Aquidneck settlers seems to have been the cutting and shipping of timber, in which, as we have seen, the island abounded. Ship-building almost immediately followed, and to this industry particularly was the early prosperity of Newport due.

One hundred and sixty-five years ago the interesting and dignified old building known in Newport as the State House was commenced, its erection being authorised by the General Assembly of 1739. Its architect was Richard Munday, whose skill and taste time has amply approved. A substantial classic structure of stone and brick, it faces the tree-shaded Parade, and from the balcony over the west entrance many an event of public importance has been announced to the waiting crowds that filled that green auditorium. Here the people of Newport in bygone days have been agitated by the tidings of a King's death, and have cheered

themselves hoarse at the proclamation of his successor. Here they have heard the result of state elections, the messages of men high in authority, the mournful news of public calamity.

The merchants of the town met here, in 1774, to plan measures of resistance against the introduction of tea; the Assembly here accepted the Declaration of Independence, which Major John Handy read from the balcony to an excited throng.

The old State House was used by both the British and the French in succession as a hospital, and when the Assembly would have met there in 1780 the building was found to have suffered so much from hard usage and neglect that the legislators were forced to hold their meeting in Providence.

The glory of the State House has departed. It is no longer anything but an empty shell, a body from which the soul has flown, since the once rival city of Providence became the sole capital of Rhode Island, and all the business of official life is departed.

In the Senate Chamber the full-length portrait of Washington looks somewhat sadly over the dusty and deserted desks. The only step that ever disturbs the quiet of the conscious stair is that of some chance visitor, who makes a solitary and melancholy echo.

Facing the Parade and in its neighbourhood are not a few of the most interesting old dwellings of Newport, some of them now, alas, perverted to baser uses. The old Custom-House, on Queen Street, was long since

destroyed by fire; the Pitts-Head tavern occupied ground where, after its destruction, the Odd Fellows Hall was erected. The Hazard house, the Nichols house, Commodore O. H. Perry's home, the Lopez mansion, the Wanton house, and many another interesting reminder of the past, have been preserved till recent years and some of them are still standing.

It is but a short walk from here to Touro Park and Governor Benedict Arnold's old stone windmill, that for so many years was falsely honoured as a relic of the Icelandic voyagers of the eleventh century. It is, notwithstanding the exposure of its spurious pretensions, a most picturesque old ruin and a veritable antique, if judged as it should be by American standards.

William Coddington first built on the north side of Marlborough Street, in 1641, a house that, however it might appear to a later generation, was doubtless a mansion of considerable pretension in his time. One has but to consider a country devoid of machinery for dressing wood or making brick, to appreciate what a two-story building, surmounted by a broad shingle roof and furnished with large brick chimneys, must have cost in that wilderness. The timbers we may suppose were hewn near by, but probably every brick came from the other side of the ocean, and certainly each shingle was cut and trimmed by hand. On Coddington's Cove there was another house of earlier date than the one in the town. These houses descended to the last Coddington, who left the colony when the British

appeared in the Revolutionary days. Unhappily he entrusted numerous records which were in his hands to a friend, and they have irrevocably disappeared.

In their day the Coddington family were of great importance, and together with the Wantons, Malbones (or Malborns), Godfreys, Brentons, Cranstons, and others of that station constituted the aristocracy of Newport.

There was a time when creeds seemed of more importance than principles, and nearly all of the colonies were steeped in some peculiar form of wrong-doing. Virginia, led by her dram-drinking, fox-hunting, roistering parsons, was sowing a lavish crop of wild oats and enjoying the exercise. Massachusetts, by the way of antithesis, pulled a long face and engaged in persecutions that appear to have afforded her elders a melancholy satisfaction. Whipping, burning, hanging, and banishing folk who disagree with one's pet dogmas, may seem a severe and sombre pastime, but no doubt it had points to commend it to the Puritan temper.

About the same time little old New York was steeped in iniquities of which Thomas Janvier has been the entertaining historian, and if we are not misinformed, her pirates infested the high seas and took toll of every merchantman they could overhaul. Now in all fairness should we not expect that the men that Massachusetts rejected and that New York refused to receive should have indulged in little peccadillos like the rest of the world, and have developed pet iniquities of their own.

In the land of Roger Williams there were Baptists, Quakers, and other good people who habitually went down to the sea in ships and did business in the great waters, and while searching the world over for the kinds of merchandise that would yield the greatest return for the capital invested and the labour bestowed, they hit upon two commodities, even rum and negroes. Some very tender-hearted historians have tried to whitewash the slave trade and dilute the rum trade till the old Narragansett adventurers would hardly recognise their own portraits. But tradition and records go hand in hand to show that the holds of not a few of the Rhode Island merchantmen of colonial times were laden with goods of a very shocking character.

Godfrey and John Malbone were in the slave trade, and one of their vessels with a cargo of negroes was bound for Narragansett Bay, when a pirate hove in sight and gave chase. The captain, who had no notion of abandoning his valuable chattels, called upon the blacks to stand by him, promising them a reward if they did so. Consenting to the proposition, they were armed with cutlasses, and when the corsairs attempted to board, met them with such fury that they were glad to escape. It is said that the slaves were well rewarded, though evidently freedom was considered beyond their deserts. Malbone, the elder, had a large farm in Connecticut, and many of the negroes were taken there, where their descendants lived for many years.

John Brown, the eminent merchant of Providence,

from whom are descended some very prominent people in Rhode Island, was largely interested in the slave trade, as were also a number of the leading men of Bristol. There were very few Newport merchants who were not engaged in that business while it was at its height. Forty or fifty vessels are reported to have

SHORE ROCKS BEYOND THE PUBLIC BATHING BEACH AT NEWPORT

been at one time engaged in this traffic. Not a few of the merchants who found a profit in it were Quakers, and we are told that they made good and indulgent masters. "To see the negro women with their black hoods and blue aprons, walking at a respectful distance behind their masters to meeting was not an unpleasant sight on those days."

The Malbones owned a brig named the *Dolphin*,

which met with a disaster "that caused painful anguish to many hearts." In the year 1767 she was bound home from Jamaica, with a rich lading of sugar and rum. There were a number of passengers on board, members of a theatrical company who were *en route* to Newport. When off Point Judith a fire was discovered in the hold and, in spite of every effort to control it, spread so rapidly that the passengers and crew were obliged to take to the boats; five women were unable to escape and the cargo was a total loss. Among those who were saved in the boats was Mr. Henry, "the father of the American stage," but the actor's wife and daughter were burned to death. The accident occurred from the carelessness of the cabin boy, who held a lighted candle near a stream of rum which he was drawing from a cask in the hold.

The loss of two large vessels, fitted out at Newport, in 1745, as privateers, claims notice. One of them was commanded by Captain Cranston and the other by Captain Brewer. They were twin ships, carrying twenty-two guns each, and were destined for the Spanish Main, where it was expected that they would do a lucrative business in overhauling merchantmen. They waited till a soothsayer had cast their horoscope, to determine the proper day for sailing, and upon the designated time set out (it was the day before Christmas) in the teeth of a driving snow-storm. They were never heard from afterwards. These ships were partly owned by Col. Godfrey Malbone. "The loss," we read, "was

considered as one of the greatest calamities that ever befell the town; besides the loss of property, upwards of four hundred lives were sacrificed and nearly two hundred women became widows by this disaster."

Captain John Dennis was another of those whose careers as gallant seamen ended in disaster. The merchants of Newport, having fitted out the *Tay*, a privateer of eighteen guns, with a crew of one hundred and eighty men, chose Dennis, who had distinguished himself upon several occasions, to command her. She sailed upon the 22d of August, 1756, and was never heard from again. Thomas, the son of this John Dennis, was a celebrated merchant of Newport, and another son, Captain William, commanded no less than thirteen privateers during the War for Independence.

A grandson of Governor Coddington—William Coddington, Esquire — together with several other well-known Newport men, were killed by the explosion of a magazine in which was stored powder designed for use on two privateers then being fitted out.

A curious story of an unguided vessel is preserved in some of the old Newport annals. In the year 1750, a Mr. Isaac Steele, merchant, of Newport, looked anxiously for an overdue brig, owned by him, which was to bring a valuable cargo from the bay of Honduras. A vessel which had sighted her two days out at sea came into port. Mr. Steele and his friends watched the harbour mouth in vain, till early one morning, standing in from the eastward, the brig appeared

with all sails set, heading for Easton's Beach. When close in she altered her course, rounded the rocks, and came quietly ashore at the northwest corner of the beach. Those who had watched her strange manœuvres with surprise lost no time in getting aboard, where, to their astonishment, they found no living thing but a dog and cat. The table in the cabin was set as for breakfast, a fire was blazing in the cuddy and a kettle boiling over it; but no trace of captain or crew was ever found.

The subsequent history of this abandoned vessel, that sailed home unpiloted, is not without interest. She was gotten off the sandy bed she had chosen, and being practically uninjured, was taken around to Godfrey Malbone's wharf, where she was sold to a merchant named Henry Collins. Under the name of the *Beach Bird* she made many successful voyages, and was still serviceable when the British took Newport. Having been captured with other shipping at that time, she was cut down and converted into an armed galley.

Gravelly Point, opposite Newport, was the scene of the hanging of twenty-six pirates, taken in 1723, by the *Greyhound*, British ship-of-war. The bodies were buried on Goat Island, and popular superstition long peopled the locality with their ghosts. Other pirates were executed "in the lot near the Powder House," in Newport, which afterwards bore the name of the Gallows Field.

One of the old romances of Newport, which might be

deemed improbable as fiction, comes to us with all the evidences of truth, and is worth retelling. One Samuel Cranston, the son of the Governor of the Colony and a prominent business man of Newport, set sail for Jamaica during the French war of 1755. Buccaneers attacked the vessel while off the coast of Florida, and he alone of all on board was saved alive. The pirates compelled him to work as a common sailor, and for seven years he remained as a slave among them, till one day an opportunity offered to escape. Alone in a boat in mid-ocean he drifted till nearly exhausted, when an English vessel picked him up and carried him to Halifax, whence he worked his way to Boston. In that city alarming news reached him. His wife, widowed as she supposed for seven years, was about to marry again, her second choice being a Mr. Russell of Boston. Cranston was not long in reaching Newport, where finding that the ceremony which would make his wife the mate of another and offer him the choice of the role of Enoch Arden or of being the cause of a domestic scandal had not yet taken place, without divulging his name he sought an audience with Mrs. Cranston. At first she refused him, but he sent her a message to the effect that he had lately seen her husband. Overcome with who shall say what emotion, the lady left the wedding preparations in which she was engaged and hastened to learn what this strange sailor had to tell. At first she failed to recognise him, but finally at some familiar word or look she knew him and rushed into his arms,

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calling him her dear husband, and rejoicing at his return. Now the sympathy of the reader of this tale must be extended, in part at least, to the unfortunate Russell, who was still waiting for his bride, and it will be somewhat of a shock to twentieth-century sensibilities to learn that Mrs. Cranston paid no regard to him whatever. While Cranston was being washed and dressed into some semblance of his former self, the expectant bridegroom and the minister waited in the parlour, nor did they have any intimation of the surprise in store for them till Mrs. Cranston entered, leaning upon her husband's arm. At that, we are informed, "The scene was worthy of the chisel of the artist and produced emotions of delight in the minds of the guests."

Mr. Russell, with true magnanimity, not only insisted that Cranston and his wife be married again, at which ceremony he gave the bride away, but is actually said to have giver her as a dower the amount he had intended to settle upon her when she became Mrs. Russell.

As Aquidneck established the first absolutely free school in America,—or in the world,—so at an early date it had also one of the best libraries to be found in the New World. The Redwood library cannot claim extraordinary merit to-day for either the size or value of its collection of books, but it has a monumental significance as an indication of the culture and aims of a generation long dead. Bishop Berkeley, landing in

Newport in 1728, found among the more cultivated people a predilection for literature, philosophy, and the arts, and by precept and the influence of personal aims he fostered that taste. A philosophical society was organised by him in conjunction with Mr. Honeyman, who had been sent to these shores by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. Some books designed for the Bermuda College were the first that fell into their hands, but before long it was appreciated that the Society must have at least the nucleus of a library of its own. While the question was being discussed Abraham Redwood, who was one of the members, donated £500 sterling for the purchase of books. Such was the beginning of the Redwood library, which for nearly a century and three quarters has been one of the notable institutions of Newport. When fairly under way the Redwood library was second only to that of Harvard in the number and excellence of its volumes. Five thousand pounds were subscribed for a building, and the library association was formerly organised, with Mr. Redwood as its president. His associates on the Board of Directors were the Rev. James Honeyman, the Rev. John Callender, Henry Collins, Edward Scott, Samuel Wickham, John Tillinghast, and Peter Bours. The ground was given by Collins and the severely classical building designed by architect Peter Harrison soon rose, to stand through the years as a memorial of the cultivated taste of colonial Newport.

In connection with the Redwood library a some-

what extensive and very interesting and valuable collection of paintings, mostly portraits of men prominent in Rhode Island, has grown to goodly proportions. The portrait of Redwood, in his Quaker garb, has by right the most prominent place in the gallery, though it is not an original, but a three-quarter length copy painted by Charles B. King. King's own portrait and that of Doctor William J. Walker are respectively on the right and left of Redwood.

The portrait of Governor Coddington was copied from the original in the City Hall. Wanton, the last Tory Governor, is represented by a fine original likeness that was painted in England. Here are also the portraits of Bishop Berkeley, Commodore Perry, Decatur, Rodgers, and many another scholar or hero. Several of the Presidents of the United States are represented, along with many of her leading statesmen and generals. It is unnecessary to enumerate these treasures that for visitors form one of the chief attractions of the town. Other libraries than the Redwood there have been and are, but none that has been so notably associated with the history and growth of Newport.

If the most interesting and important of the older landmarks of this enchanting old place were named in order, Trinity Church might claim a preëminent place. Certainly it is the one upon which the eye first rests, for approaching Newport from almost any direction it rises in beauty to challenge the attention and interest of the traveller. As has been well said, "It is justly

admired, for its proportions are good and its details unlike and far above anything to be found in the old New England meeting house." It suggests Wren, from whom its inspiration undoubtedly was drawn, and is one of the few edifices now standing in America that preserve, not only in exterior lines, but in interior furnishing and decoration, the spirit and form of the eighteenth century. The high pulpit and sounding board, the oak encased organ, adorned with crown and mitres, the antique pews, and all the minor details of furniture, speak eloquently of the days when Berkeley or Honeyman preached and governors and statesmen, merchants and fine dames, sat in the pews. In the old graveyard are many of the names that are inscribed in this book and many more that history has treasured. If one strays then between candle-lighting and cock-crow, he will perhaps discover a long procession of ghosts seeking among the habitations of the living the boundaries of their old estates.

There one might encounter the familiar form of Abraham Redwood, gliding arm in arm with "Quaker Tom" Robinson, whose house on Washington Street has survived till the present day. He was a fine old man, but a Tory, and his house a refuge for Tories before the English occupation. Near by his residence was the Hunter house, where Colonel Wanton once lived.

There goes the most eccentric old ghost that ever limped out into the light of the moon. He wears an

old rusty white beaver hat that has not been removed from his head, except in sleep, during the memory of any of his contemporaries. One wonders whether he wore it underground. He is Abiel Spenser, who was a cabinet-maker at the beginning of things, but afterwards took a store and gradually fell into the way of keeping drugs. He scarcely ever left his store, going as far as Thames Street not more than once or twice in a dozen years. Every one in town knew him as "Doctor." A real doctor of Abiel's generation was Enoch Hazard, of the old Hazard family of Kingstown. He was a bit of an autocrat, as old-school doctors assumed the right to be, and ruled his patients as he pleased.

There is Collins—Henry Collins—who gave for most public objects, and was particularly liberal in his contributions to both the Redwood library and the City Hall, but lost his own beautiful house because of his debts.

Old Solomon Southwick gives Quaker Tom a wide berth, for he was the patriot editor of the *Newport Mercury* and scourged the British both before and after their sojourn in Newport. His house is on the corner of Walnut and Washington Streets, and is celebrated partly because of a foolish story that credits it with being the repository for some of Kidd's treasure. Just who buried it no one can say, for the noted freebooter died on the gallows about sixty years before the foundations of the Southwick house were laid.

Washington Street was the home of many of the old

worthies. At the north end of it is the site (hardly more) of old Fort Greene, where used to be a semicircular water battery, and above it a system of earth-works. The first attempt at making a military defence at this point was in 1776, and there the active farmer-soldiers of the patriot army threw up a breast-work in a single night, and with the guns they planted there so annoyed the British ship of war *Scarborough* that she was obliged to slip her cables and withdraw as rapidly as possible. The fort that was afterward built on that spot was superseded by Fort Adams.

Not far from this place several prosperous Jews once had a spermaceti chandlery. These Hebrews organised the first large American business syndicate of which I have seen any account. The chandlers of Philadelphia, Providence, and Newport agreed that all crude spermaceti, wherever landed in the colonies, should be bought on joint account and divided according to a pro-rata agreement. More than half the product of the whale oil that came at that time into the colony was used at the Newport works.

There were many not-to-be-forgotten men, important factors in the local life in their generation, though not of the wealthiest or greatest. Old Jonathan Nichols kept the White Horse Inn, and was a boniface of no small consideration. The sign that swung over his door was painted by Halpin, who did a flourishing business among his neighbours in trade. Whether he originated the ideas for the signs he painted no one

knows, but a sense of humour evidently animated whoever was responsible for them. One woman stitched at nether garments under the alluring legend of The Leather Breeches. An apothecary's shop was "The Golden Mortar," and a saloon "The Golden Calf." One firm of soap chandlers were known as "The Bunch of Grapes."

On Thames Street, near New Lane, there was a popular place of refreshment called the British Coffee House. Abigail Stoneman, a strenuous business woman of the day, kept that and several other "publics," where "any civil and polite person" could by the "payment of a quarter of a dollar for each gentleman have the use of a good dancing room, with music and lights." On Gravely Point, William Treley, a sailmaker, kept a shop which he called the Trysail. Thomas Greene kept the Roebuck, on Thames Street; the Golden Eagle of John Bours was a place for dry-goods, and William Ladd's Golden Lion dealt in goods that were not dry.

The Decatur family, the most distinguished member of which was Stephen Decatur, Commodore in the young navy of the United States, were Newport people. The unfortunate duel with Commodore Barron, in which Decatur lost his life, made a great stir throughout the United States, the interest being hardly less than that which the celebrated Burr-Hamilton duel had aroused. The first of the Decatur family to come to America was the Commodore's grandfather, a Genoese.

I have spoken elsewhere of the *Newport Mercury* as a patriot journal, edited and owned by Solomon Southwick. That and the *Rhode Island Gazette* were both founded by James Franklin, about 1757, when he was driven out of Boston for his radical opinions and found a refuge in the common haven for all radicals.

For many years Newport numbered among her best and most influential citizens a number of Hebrews whose genesis and exodus have both seemed involved in considerable mystery. To-day nothing remains to suggest them but a beautiful little burial ground that has inspired many speculations in prose and at least one poem, that of Longfellow, entitled "The Jewish Cemetery at Newport." Those Jewish merchants have left a reputation for honest dealing, for clean living, and for unstinted public service, so that to-day no sketch of Newport could be written that did not include them.

From a document quoted by the Rev. Edward Peterson we get some light upon the origin of the Newport Jews. "In the spring of 1658 Mordecai Campannall, Moses Packeckoe, Levi and others, in all fifteen families, arrived in Newport from Holland. They brought with them the three first degrees of Masonry, and worked them in the house of Campannall, and continued to do, they and their successors, to the year 1742." George Champlin Mason in his *Reminiscences of Newport* says that "the Jews, who did so much to promote the interest of Newport, were seen here as

early as 1677, or perhaps earlier. At that time they bought a piece of ground for a burial place."

From the first these aliens enjoyed the same protection and favour under Rhode Island laws as were enjoyed by other colonists. At one time indeed a clause which had been added to the naturalisation laws of the colony and which discriminated in favour of Christians, was brought up to defeat the petition of Aaron Lopez and Isaac Elizar, Portuguese Jews, to be admitted to the rights of citizenship. The clause had been a dead letter up to that time (1762) and was soon afterward repealed. There was, among the older citizens of Hebrew blood, one Jacob Rodriguez Rivera, whose daughter Aaron Lopez married. Others of that family came from Portugal and engaged in business, seldom meddling with politics, but known for their probity and their liberality. Lopez and Jacob Joseph were among the founders of the Redwood library and Rivera was a stockholder. Mason quotes the following notice of marriage, published in a New York paper in October, 1759:

Mr. Moses Lopez, a gentleman of very large fortune, from the West Indies, to Miss Maria Lopez, daughter of Mr. Aaron Lopez.

Her Beauty, Innocence, and Truth
Unite to bless the happy Youth,
And in return we too shall find
Sound Judgment, Reason, Sense refined
In him are happily Combined:
Which, with £5000 a year,
Are well bestowed upon the fair.

This was copied by a Newport paper, which was called upon to contradict it in its next number.

The Pollocks were among the prominent Hebrew families of the place, as were also the Judahs, Meyers, Seixas, Isaacs, Hays, and a host besides. A little after the middle of the eighteenth century there were sixty families or more and a synagogue was established.

Preëminent among all these names of men who, even while they mingled with their Gentile neighbours, were isolated as an alien clan, stands that of Touro. Isaac Touro, priest of the Congregation, came here in 1760, and when the war commenced went to Jamaica. Abraham Touro, son of the preceding, accompanied his uncle and brother Judah to Boston and engaged in business there. At his death, which occurred in his forty-ninth year, it was found that he had bequeathed to various Newport and Rhode Island institutions a considerable part of his fortune. Judah Touro became very wealthy and during his residence in Newport gave liberally of his means to every worthy object. Moses Hays, the uncle of the Touros, who took them with him to Boston, was a Mason of exalted rank. He was appointed under the Scottish Rite as "Deputy Inspector General for America," and afterwards for four years held the office of Grand Master of the Massachusetts Grand Lodge.

Scattered and gone, these Hebrew merchants may fitly be numbered among the ghosts of Newport. We stand before the beautiful gate of their cemetery, with

its inverted torches upon either hand, and repeat Longfellow's lines :

> The trees are white with dust, that o'er their sleep
> Wave their broad curtains in the south wind's breath,
> While underneath such leafy tents they keep
> The long, mysterious exodus of death.

Chapter XI

Along Shore on Aquidneck

IT is difficult to determine which is the obverse and which is the reverse side of Newport, if we may be permitted to borrow terms from the numismatologists. To enjoy the most celebrated and noteworthy feature of modern Newport it is necessary to cross to the ocean side, where the cliffs, broken, ragged, unconquered yet, if not in the æons to come unconquer able, confront the untiring waves of the Atlantic. From Easton's Beach, where the tempered surf rolls in green and red for the delectation of the unseparated multitude, there is a distant view of unmargined sea, beyond Sachuest and Saconnet. In the centre of the picture stands Cormorant Rock and the breeze that sweeps in from beyond it is as sparkling and exhilarating as wine, but with never a hint of a headache to follow, and a merry crowd throng the space between the pavilions and the water's edge.

Stretching to the left of this beach there is a rocky shore, terminating in a point where lie the chaotic evidences of a war of the Titans, but the way to the mansions of the elect lies along the cliffs to the right, As every one

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Twenty-five or thirty years past, when Charlotte Cushman's house was pointed out as one of the attractions of the cliff walk, and when a delightfully clever writer could say of these modern cliff dwellings that "for the season, $2000 is considered a moderate rental," Newport may have been a possible haven for "people of moderate means," but to-day only immoderate means may compass a home in that favoured spot.

The sweep of lawns that have been top dressed with dollars before they consented to assume such a velvety verdance, come down to the very path, and flowers, grown with all the exquisite precision that professional pride demands, make a picture not easily forgotten.

To name those who have built palaces along the Cliff Walk would be to enumerate many of the leaders in the social or business world in America, a task certainly not demanded by the plan of this book. Had they been gathered with the Wantons, the Coddingtons, the Touros or the Brentons, from one to two centuries ago, we might perhaps find concerning them some legend with which the world to-day is not perfectly familiar.

A mile or two north-east of Newport is "Tonomy Hill," the name a lazy corruption of Miantonimo. It is clearly visible from Mount Hope and is the highest point of land in the southern part of Aquidneck. There are still, near the top, remains of the fortifications that were occupied in turn by the soldiers of both the opponents in the Revolutionary struggle.

Quaker Hill, further north, and Slate Hill, lying between them about midway, are other elevations that are interesting principally because of their association with military movements. We are following the retreat of Sullivan and his forces, before the battle of Tiverton Heights, and we can trace step by step the dogged withdrawal of that plucky band that had, without the promised French support, bearded the British garrison at Newport.

Our excursion is nearly finished. We have come back to the second oldest town in Rhode Island, where the Antinomian exiles made their first settlement after leaving Providence. Here it was that Coggeshall stayed with the majority of his fellows; hence Coddington and the more adventurous went forth upon a wiser second thought to fix upon a more advantageous locality. The foresight that prompted them to settle Newport seems to-day so evident that we do not credit them with more than ordinary perspicacity.

From the old Portsmouth records we glean some curious facts illustrative of the simple life of the early settlers and the transcription of a few entries may not be uninteresting.

"Aug. 21st 1654. At a meeting of the inhabitants of Portsmouth it is voated that Assamequin shall have his Coate payed him forthwith for his rent of the medows on the maine land on the North side of Roade Island." Following this, on the same date was written: "It is voated and concluded that all the affayers of Generall

Court shalbe transacted by a committee of six men of each towne Chosen to that end; except elextion." We cannot but be glad that "elextion" was excepted if only for the sake of the spelling.

Again we read: "It is ordered that this committee, [Wm. Baulston, John Roome, Richard Bordin, Thomas Cornell Senior, John Briggs, and William Hall] are authorized to meete at Warwick with the rest of ye towne's committees at the day nuport neighbers shall appoint; with as full power as if the towne were present etc." There is one very suggestive entry that leads us to suspect that scolding wives were not absolutely unknown in Portsmouth. "It is ordered that a doppinge stoole shalbe made in this towne and sett at the water side by the po—de (Pond?)." The doppinge stoole was no other than that well-known institution of old, the ducking stool, a rude chair affixed to the end of a pole or plank and balanced over the water. In it some offender against domestic peace, generally a woman with an ungovernable tongue, was securely tied and then "ducked."

Under date of June 23, 1654, we read that "At a towns meeting it is voated for this towne to joyne with Newport in the purchase of Cunnuniquut Iland—and Dutch Island with it." I have referred to the fact that upon some of the old charts Dutch Island was spelled Duck Island. Here is a still older authority for the present name.

Sometimes we catch a glimpse of a dilemma out of

which the fathers of the settlement found it hard to crawl, as when John Mott, being infirm and a charge upon the community, is offered the benefit of a sea voyage provided several things do not interfere with the plan. "It is agreed that the towne wilbee at the Charge to pay ould John motts passage to the Barbades Iland and

THE NORTH END OF AQUIDNECK, COAL PIER, AND BREAKERS

back againe, if he cannot be received there, if he liue (live) to it, if the shippe owners will carry him." We cannot help feeling curious to know whether old John after all got his passage to the Barbadoes, whether he lived to get there, or whether he returned to again puzzle the careful heads of the elders, and what may have been the matter with old John Mott.

Somehow those two last-quoted records in the Ports-

mouth statute books seem rich with "local colour" and bring us wondrous near the homely and prosaic cares that beset the daily lives of the Portsmouth exiles.

Whenever it was possible upon the shores of Aquidneck, as elsewhere along the borders of Narragansett Bay, shipyards were established and the abundant timber of the country converted into vessels that soon made a world-wide reputation for their sailing qualities. The east shore of the bay vied with the west shore in this respect. It was not for nothing that the British were at such pains to invest Newport and employ a fleet to patrol the lower waters of Narragansett. It was well understood in the old world that here was the very centre, the cradle, of the naval strength of the colonies. Here was the home of the privateers, the chief ship-yard of the continent. There could be no other reason given for the pains with which the army and navy of King George conspired to seize and to occupy a town otherwise so unimportant from a strategic point of view.

One of the celebrated Wanton family was a shipbuilder at Tiverton, divided only by a narrow strait from the upper end of Aquidneck. Another famous designer of vessels, at a later day, was Captain James Aldrich, who was born at Westerly in 1786 and died at Tower Hill in 1832. To him is credited the building of the first three-masted schooner that was ever sailed, and he is also said to have made practicable, if he did not invent, the modern centreboard boat.

It seems a natural sequence to the long line of marine architects that have made Narragansett Bay the scene of their labours, that the Herreshoff family at Bristol should be in our time supporting Rhode Island's cherished reputation by building invincible cup defenders.

As elsewhere in the world, the transition from sailing craft to steam-vessels made a serious impression upon the old-time shipyards. A great revolution followed the appearance of "Fulton's Teapot" and a great industry began then to decline.

An amusing anecdote is told in connection with the voyage of the *Cleremont* from New York to Providence. Owing to some slight accident to her machinery, or perhaps to a shortage of fuel, the boat stopped at Point Judith, and the inhabitants, thinking that surely a wreck had come ashore, flocked to the scene. As they approached they discovered what to them were indubitable signs that the supposed wreck was on fire. Then, to their astonishment she sailed away without a rag of canvas, yet evidently under control and belching fire and smoke as she went.

Mr. Joseph P. Hazard, writing from Peacedale in 1884 to the *Narragansett Historical Register*, says that the first line of steamers that ran between New York, Newport, and Providence started in 1823. One of the boats so employed was the *Fulton*, the other the *Connecticut*—according to Mr. Hazard's memory. The price of a passage from Providence to New York was ten dollars, and nine dollars from Newport. The general

impression seemed to prevail that these steamboats were unsafe and whoever took passage on one took his life in his hands. These packets made the passage from one end of the line to the other in an average time of three or four days, though sixteen hours was the minimum time recorded.

The accommodations were of the most primitive kind. There were berths, a dozen or so, in the hold, and a passenger must carry whatever his comfort required. About 1827 the first Sound steamer furnished with state-rooms made a great sensation. Her name was the *Benjamin Franklin* and her captain, Joseph Comstock. He and his son, we are told, commanded Sound steamers as late as 1870.

As the old order changes we are apt to forget how very few years will bridge the interval between our own day and what we are fond of referring to as the historic past. A few years more and—who knows—our own time and story may be food for the antiquary, and furnish the source of numberless romantic traditions.

Chapter XII

Old Haunts in East Greenwich and Wickford

IN the foregoing chapters the reader has not been personally conducted in a continuous circuit of the great bay. It has seemed better to tell of the natural charm and the historic and legendary interest of Narragansett in topical chapters, and in pursuance of this plan the description of East Greenwich and its neighbourhood, which, had this been a guide-book, would have come after Warwick in consecutive order, has been reserved for the closing pages of the book.

For many years a jealousy existed between Warwick and East Greenwich, the inhabitants of each village contending warmly for the honour and profit of providing the seat of government for Kent County. That dispute was finally settled in favour of the latter place, and to-day one is surprised to learn that there could ever have been a contention, the disproportion of the rivals in size and importance being so evident.

That is a delightful old-fashioned corner where the main street of East Greenwich crosses the dividing line between two townships. The line is marked by Division Street, which runs westward from the bay, with

Warwick township upon the north and East Greenwich at the south of it. The main street, which is used throughout its length by the electric cars of the suburban system, is older than any white man's tradition of Narragansett Bay, for it here follows the ancient Pequot trail, over which warlike tribes of red men passed in unreckoned succession before Verrazani's keel had

EAST GREENWICH HARBOUR

found the channels between Saconnet and Point Judith. At the intersection of these two principal thoroughfares stands a group of charmingly sedate old houses and venerable trees.

This crossing of the ways is evidently the nucleus of whatever is oldest and historically most interesting in East Greenwich; within a few blocks in any direction from this point there are a number of houses that sug-

gest colonial or early Continental occupancy, and not a few actually antedate the time when Generals Greene, Sullivan, Lafayette, and a score of noted Revolutionary soldiers, were familiar figures in East Greenwich streets. Unlike most American villages, this one shows little tendency to change the simple and generous architectural fashions of a conservative past for modern rainbow eclecticism. In blessed contrast to newer towns, or old towns that would be thought progressive, there is here a restful prevalence of cool, white walls, and green blinds; while brass knockers, as resplendent as the metal of a man-of-war, adorn not a few of the doors, and form a series of congruous "remarques" to the broad simplicity of Rhode Island gables.

A short distance south of the corners stands a handsome white court house, surmounted by a cupola and weather-vane, and occupying the site of an older building formerly devoted to the same purpose. Upon the opposite side of the way, not far from the court house, the principal hotel of the place has above its entrance a large wooden bunch of grapes, that once formed the sign of the village tavern. The dwelling that occupies the corner of Marlborough and Queen Streets, nearer the water front, was formerly the county jail. Southwest of the crossing, upon the first plateau above the court house, stands the old Academy, to which generations of youth from the surrounding country have flocked; and directly south of that still stands the old Quaker Meeting-house, though not now used for re-

ligious services. Several streets starting westward from the main street are mere courts or closes, level for a block and then terminating abruptly in flights of stairs, by which the height of the next terrace is reached. This feature gives a peculiarly foreign air to the neighbourhood.

The whole atmosphere of East Greenwich is old-fashioned and restful. Its tone is quiet, its temper conservative. Business languishes; a few of the more energetic citizens find a daily outlet for their activity in Providence, a dozen miles away, and the remainder live in semi-rural quiet as their fathers lived before them.

As an antithesis to the habitual aspect of the place, there are occasional incursions of modern frivolity, when a wave of latter-day fashion rolls up Narragansett and its very crest breaks in Cowesett Bay. At times the basin is filled with a concourse of yachts, as when the New York Yacht Club has made this its rendezvous, upon the occasion of the annual cruise.

East Greenwich was settled in 1677, and shortly afterwards incorporated. In the following year its name was changed to Dedford, but this cognomen did not meet with popular favour and the old one was finally restored. The change of name was due to the King's assumption of the title to the Narragansett country, under the name of King's Province, many place names at that time being dropped and others substituted. North Kingstown then became Rochester, and Westerly, Haversham. Kent County was set off

from Providence in 1750, and East Greenwich was then made the county-seat. In colonial history its record is not a remarkable one, but during the Revolution it became very important to the Continental cause, because it was the most southerly town of any size in Rhode Island that was not surrendered to the British when they held possession of the lower bay. Here the then Governor of the State resided and the military leaders of the time met in council with the civil authorities.

The patriotic sentiment of the inhabitants of East Greenwich and the neighbouring towns found expression in a military organisation called the Kentish Guards, which came into being in the year 1774, and is still in existence. The enrolment of the Guards was anticipatory of the struggle which then seemed inevitable between Great Britain and her American colonies, and its first actual military service was with the "embattled farmers" of Concord and Lexington. A later service rendered by the Guards to the State was during Dorr's Rebellion in 1842, and in 1861 this historic body was again called into action as company H of the First Rhode Island regiment.

The Pawtuxet Rangers and the Kentish Guards were created by act of the General Assembly in the same year, the latter including among its members General James Mitchell Varnum, General Nathaniel Greene, Colonel Christopher Greene, and other well-known soldiers of the Continental army. The Guards belonged

to the so-called "Army of Observation," commissioned to serve in Rhode Island and neighbouring colonies. This army was subsequently divided into three regiments, and formed a brigade over which General Greene was placed in command.

It has been affirmed that the Kentish Guards furnished more officers of importance in the Revolutionary Army than any other organisation of equal size in the country. Whether or not this be true, there is evidence of a very active and efficient participation in the Revolution on the part of the men of Kent. At their hands Captain Wallace, of the British Navy, met with a most determined resistance when he attempted to extend his notorious depredations into the neighbourhood of Cowesett Bay. His effort to treat East Greenwich as he had treated Bristol, Warren, and many another unprotected town was met by such opposition that he was fain to retreat. The Guards erected a fort, which they called Fort Daniel, about half-way between East Greenwich and Chipinoxet, nearly opposite Long Point. The cannon from this fort were taken to West Point after the war. There is now nothing left to mark the site of this defence.

The most celebrated of the sons of East Greenwich was General Nathaniel Greene, who stood next to Washington in ability and authority during the War for Independence, and who enjoyed in so marked a a degree the confidence and affection of the Commander-in-chief. He was born at Pottowomut, not two miles

327 THE BIRTHPLACE OF GENERAL NATHANIEL GREENE, SINCE REMODELLED

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from the heart of East Greenwich, in the year 1742, and sprang, as so many fighting men of Rhode Island have done, from a Quaker family. He worked in his youth in the forge that his father owned, at Coventry, where the old Greene House is still preserved, though remodelled out of all semblance to its former appearance, while of the forge nothing is left.

I think that the most interesting dwelling-house in Kent County, and second to none in Rhode Island, is the so-called Governor Greene House, that stands on the Warwick side of Division Street, in East Greenwich, about half a mile east of the main street. The house is a development from one built in 1684 or 1685 by Samuel Gorton, Jr., the son of the Warwick Moses who led the third exodus of exiles from Massachusetts to a settlement upon the shores of Narragansett. Upon the original building of Gorton additions have been made by successive generations of occupants, the result being a large and rambling, old-fashioned mansion, unpretentious, yet attractive and home-like, set in a landscape of peculiar beauty and replete with associations of historic interest. The older part of the house is marked by a large, stone chimney, which is about the centre of the present building, though originally upon the west side of the dwelling, and half out-of-doors. This chimney was enclosed by an addition which itself is not by any means modern.

The main entrance to the house is upon the south side and is shaded by a row of ancient trees. A large

and handsome brass knocker at the front door gives promise of treasures within doors, and this assurance is amply justified by the interior arrangement and furnishing of the house. At the left of the entrance is a reception room, which contains a portrait of Governor William Greene and not a few articles of furniture that date from colonial times. This apartment overlooks the valley to the westward and the window from which that enchanting view is obtained is still known as Franklin's window for it was here when a visitor at the Greene mansion that the greatest of early American philosophers loved to sit. On the opposite side of the entry hall a mammoth fireplace opens into the ancient chimney—a fireplace so large that a man or woman of average height can walk erect into it and look upward to the clear sky above. The andirons are of brass and as tall as a ten-year old child. Above the fireplace, under the shelf of the mantel hangs a small bronze medallion portrait of Franklin, which Poor Richard himself is said to have placed there.

"The venerable aspect of the place," says Mr. O. P. Fuller, in his *History of Warwick*, "has been well preserved in such details as low ceilings, figured porcelain tiles, etc." Of old furniture, such as would delight the heart of any æsthetic housekeeper, there is throughout the house a goodly store; in fact almost every room is a museum of treasures that have been accumulating since early colonial times. There are unique mahogany "high boys" with drawers in the lower part and cup-

THE GOVERNOR GREENE HOUSE ON THE NORTH SIDE OF DIVISION STREET, A SHORT DISTANCE FROM THE CENTRE OF EAST GREENWICH

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boards above, of unusual patterns and unusual beauty; wine coolers, desks, chairs, four-posters, rare china, pictures and *bric-a-brac*, things that must arouse the covetousness of every collector, but which are jealously guarded as relics of an historic past.

The well-curb, enclosed in lattice-work, standing at the south side of the house, was built in 1794 and is surmounted by a gilded weather-cock, but the barn and outbuildings belonging to the premises are of modern construction.

The place was the 17th lot in what was known as the Cowesett purchase, at the time of the first settlement of this shore by the whites. It was purchased from Samuel Gorton in 1718 by Samuel Greene, who was a son of Deputy-Governor John Greene, and the husband of Gorton's niece. It has been kept so far intact that although almost within the limits of East Greenwich village there are still three hundred acres of the original lot preserved with the house, and during the whole of its history but one deed of purchase, I am told, has been made since the property was acquired from the Indians.

Samuel Greene died in 1720 and was succeeded by his son William, who was Deputy-Governor of the colony from July 1740 to May 1743, and was afterwards Governor from 1743 to 1758, dying in office during the latter year.

The house was enlarged by William Greene, Jr., in 1758, in view of his then approaching marriage. General Nathaniel Greene was also married here, where he

first met Miss Catherine Littlefield, his future bride. The wedding ceremony was performed by Elder Gorton, on July 20th, 1774.

William Greene, Jr., was elected to the office of Chief Justice in Rhode Island in 1777, and in the following year was chosen to fill the gubernatorial chair, holding this office for eight subsequent years. The south-west room of the house was his council-room, where, with the officers of the State and such distinguished military advisers as Sullivan, Greene, Lafayette, Rochambeau, and their associates, he discussed measures of public policy and laid plans for co-operation with Washington and the Continental army.

On the wall of the council-room used to hang an engraved portrait of General Greene, presented by Lafayette to Mrs. Shaw, Greene's daughter. It bore the inscription, "To dear Mrs. Shaw from her father's companion in arms and most intimate friend, Lafayette." Peale's portrait of General Greene, from the Hon. William Bingham's collection, adorned the opposite wall. There are in the old house many interesting mementoes of Washington, Franklin, Lafayette, and other notable men of their day.

The Hon. Ray Greene, member of the Senate of the United States in 1799, was Lieutenant-Governor during Governor Burnside's administration, and was the last one of the Greene name to occupy the old mansion. It afterwards passed by inheritance through a female heir to another branch of the family.

At the rear of the house, at some little distance to the north, the old family burial ground, surrounded by four walls of tall evergreen trees, holds in mortuary remembrance the high standing and many excellencies of the distinguished family who in their time made the old house one of the most important social and political centres in the State.

General Varnum, one of the familiar guests at the Greene mansion in its period of greatest importance, was also a resident of East Greenwich, where his house is still standing.

The Arnolds, who were almost if not quite as much in evidence as the Greenes, were a family of great social and commercial interests and wide influence. They were largely engaged in trade with the West Indies, Surinam, and the Spanish main. Colonel William Arnold was the proprietor of the Bunch of Grapes, the old inn that stood upon the site of the Updike House.

Many of the colonial merchants of Kent County, in common with those of other trade centres in Rhode Island, became interested in privateering, and spent large sums of money in building and equipping those irregular cruisers that were the terror of British shipping during the War for Independence. Benjamin Greene Fry, in a geneological record of the Fry family, tells of a privateering ancestor of his, who fitted out a little schooner of fifty tons, and with it captured a large English vessel loaded with dry-goods. The English captain "actually shed tears, and remarked, had he been

captured by a respectable force he could have borne it with more fortitude, but to be captured by a d——d old squaw in a hog-trough was more than he could endure."

One of the more notable men of this place at a later day was the historian George Washington Greene,

THE WINDMILL HOUSE, ONCE THE RESIDENCE OF PROFESSOR GEO. W. GREENE

who was born in East Greenwich in 1811, and died here seventy-two years later. He was a grandson of General Nathaniel Greene, and has been widely known as the author of a biography of his distinguished ancestor. For many years his works on general history made his name a familiar one to a generation of students whose children are now more familiar with John

Fiske and his contemporaries. In 1872 Mr. Greene was appointed non-resident Professor of American History at Cornell University. During the prime of his life he numbered among his friends most of the foremost literary people of the day.

Longfellow was his intimate, and an evidence of their friendship is still to be seen in the odd octagonal tower attached to the house that was Professor Greene's home, on Division Street. That tower was originally a windmill and belonged to Longfellow. It occupied a lot to the east of the one owned by Greene and was presented by the poet to his friend and by him moved to the position it now occupies.

The region about Cowesett Bay and North Kingstown was once the scene of a religious fraud or delusion, as singular as any that is recorded.

Jemima Wilkinson, an ambitious and unscrupulous woman, who flourished about the middle of the eighteenth century, made East Greenwich the chief scene of her activity, and found here a crowd of credulous followers, before whom she posed as an incarnation of the Divine personality.

Born in Cumberland County in 1751, the eighth of twelve children, Jemima passed her early years upon her father's farm, growing up to be as selfish and self-willed a baggage as ever provoked a hard-working parent. She is said to have shown an early tendency to deceit and lawlessness. Left motherless at an early age, she soon showed the lack of a restraining hand

and became a leader among the wilder spirits of the neighbourhood. Her early developed beauty, vivacity, and self-will made her the admiration of the lads and the despair of all the lasses in her little world, till about the time that she was leaving her teens, when suddenly she professed to have experienced a change of heart and renounced the frivolities to which she had been so eager a devotee.

Following this startling conversion came the news that Jemima was seriously ill, of a malady which baffled the simple medical skill of that day and set all the old wives agog. The disease culminated in a state of apparent unconsciousness, from which the patient did not recover for several days, when without warning or preface she arose, professing sudden and complete restoration to health. All this seemed strange enough to the watchers who surrounded the bed of the girl who was supposed to be at the very door of death; but stranger revelations were to follow. Jemima Wilkinson, they were informed, no longer lived. She was dead and her spirit had departed,—but the reincarnated spirit of the Saviour of Mankind animated her restored body. This blasphemous assumption was coupled with the statement that in this form He would dwell upon earth and reign a thousand years, the body He had chosen for his habitation to be at the end of that time translated, without corruption.

The first opposition to the claim made by Jemima Wilkinson came from her own family, and the neigh-

bourhood was not slow to give expression to its dissent; but the Universal Friend, as she styled herself, after a time succeeded, as all religious imposters have done since history was born, in gathering about her a few devoted dupes, people not mad enough to be confined for lunacy, nor sane enough to form just opinions.

Public meetings followed in course of time, and here the natural gifts of the prophetess began to assert themselves. To her great beauty was added singular grace and charm of manner, a musical voice, and a persuasive eloquence that seems to have been well-nigh irresistible.

There appears but little doubt that the Wilkinson woman's career, which lasted many years, was one of conscious fraud, for the chicanery and subterfuges which she employed in working her pretended miracles preclude the theory that she was self-deceived. Her moral character was notoriously bad, and at one time a robbery of public money was traced to her, but so strong was her influence that she escaped punishment.

Among her most devoted followers was Judge William Potter of South Kingstown, who built a new wing upon his house for her use when she was in that neighbourhood. Mrs. Potter is said not to have been a believer in the claims of the Universal Friend, and probably did not appreciate an intimacy that seemed at least equivocal. In Jemima's state journeys from town to town she sat upon a white horse and Judge Potter rode next to her sacred person.

Upon the death of the Judge's daughter she gathered a large concourse of people before whom she pretended to raise the girl to life, but, finding no opportunity to carry out the deception, she ascribed her failure to a lack of faith on the part of her audience. The same excuse served when several thousand persons, who had gathered to witness her advertised feat of walking upon the water of Narragansett Bay, remained to scoff at her inability to keep her promise.

On one occasion, while addressing an audience, she suddenly paused and said: "There is one here who will never see the light of another day." There was great excitement and even consternation at this statement, and it was not allayed when, upon the night following, a negro who had been among her hearers died in an agony which suggested poisoning.

When she announced that she would publicly raise to life a follower who was supposed to have been dead for four days, a large concourse of people gathered to witness the miracle. Unfortunately for Jemima's pretensions, a skeptical military officer, who was present, proposed to run the corpse through with his sword to insure against mistakes. He pricked the supposed dead man so sharply that the coffin was vacated before Jemima could take any hand in the affair and the miracle exploded prematurely. The sight of a figure arrayed in a shroud, scrambling out of the building with an eager swordsman in pursuit, roused the edified congregation to wild enthusiasm.

Several transactions which would not bear close investigation caused Jemima to leave Rhode Island for a time, and she took herself and her pretensions to Pennsylvania, where she resided for several years, but finally returned and at last, having announced that she was going away, died of dropsy. The certainty that she was dead alone destroyed the foolish faith of her followers.

North Kingstown, lying south-east of East Greenwich, was frequently subjected during the Revolution to petty invasion by the enemy, and her inhabitants irritated by predatory incursions. It occupied, indeed, nearly the same position that the region about Tarrytown on the Hudson did, being a sort of neutral territory. The Newtown Rangers, like the military companies referred to above, was formed to meet local conditions of peril and was organised in 1777, by George Waite Babcock, Joseph Taylor, John Slocum and Christopher Pierce. The number of men enlisted, exclusive of officers, did not exceed sixty-four. The Greenes, Phillips, Barton and other prominent citizens were active in all these affairs.

The trolley that runs through East Greenwich and follows for part of its course the old Pequot trail, crosses the Potowomut River and runs through North Kingstown to the quiet and delightful old village of Wickford. Be it understood that the village to which this paragraph refers is that ancient, secluded, slow, and altogether pleasant repository for many traditions of

past importance, that sits by the waters of one of the deep, ragged bays of the west shore, and wonders what has become of her lost commerce. Wickford Junction, the railroad station at which passengers on the New Haven Railroad change for Narragansett Pier and Newport, is another sort of a place, mainly interesting because it is upon the way to some other point.

After the Revolution old Wickford enjoyed a prosperous commercial era. It sprang then from the enforced idleness that was the result of British control, to a brief maritime importance, for a time rivalling Providence and excelling most Rhode Island towns in the activity of its shipyards. Although admirably situated as a shipping and distributing centre, its importance gradually waned, till long ago it became what it is to-day, a charming but isolated spot, with considerable reminiscent interest. It is a place for an artist or poet to dream in; its old houses and quiet streets are full of what the novelists of to-day call "local colour," and its houses would many of them well reward the labours of the curio hunter.

Not far north of Wickford, along the line of the trolley, is a place where we may appropriately close our itinerary. It is the spot where the first Englishman who built upon the shores of Narragansett Bay, erected a blockhouse for trading purposes, in 1639. Richard Smith was not a settler in the sense that Williams, Coddington, or Gorton were. He had no following, took no part in colony building, made no permanent

impress upon the minds or lives of men of his own or any other time, but he built a house before Roger Williams came to Providence, and popular tradition asserts that it is yet standing.

Smith settled on Point Wharf Cove, and his first

THE BABBITT FARMHOUSE, NEAR WICKFORD. THIS BUILDING IS SAID TO BE AN ENLARGEMENT OF RICHARD SMITH'S BLOCKHOUSE

neighbour is said to have been Williams, who soon sold out to him his holding, which included Rabbit Island. In 1656, Smith leased the land upon which Wickford was afterwards built. This territory, extending as far south as the Annaquatucket River, he soon after

secured by a thousand-year lease, adding to it another tract on the north and east, known as Calve's Neck. His various leaseholds finally aggregated twenty-seven square miles.

The trading-house built by Smith was afterward incorporated in the building which has borne successively among others the names of Updyke, Congdon, and Babbitt. As the Babbitt farmhouse it is still pointed out to visitors to Wickford.

At the time of Philip's war tradition tells that a band of settlers, inflamed with the smell of "villainous saltpeter" and blood, and perhaps somewhat exhilerated by a fluid then much valued by good New Englanders, arrived at Smith's blockhouse with Indian prisoners. Having tied these captives to chairs, the doughty men of Massachusetts further refreshed themselves with some of the trader's private stock, and soon became delightfully mellow. It is well understood that to make a Puritan New Englander convivial something out of the ordinary was required, and we must believe that the potations of this particular company were long and deep, for a vein of rare pleasantry was developed among its members. Even in his mirth, however, the Puritan was not as other men, and there was a dreadful grimness in his pleasantry. It happened at last that one of the Indian fighters in the course of the carousal hilariously struck off his captive's head with his sword. As the gory ball rolled away it struck a tall clock in the corner and the sensitive timepiece, unable to con-

tain itself, struck one. The conclusion of this charming story, I regret to say, has long been lost. There is a similar vagueness concerning another Indian victim, who, trussed like a fowl, was roasted (again tradition is sponsor for the tale) in the great fireplace.

Another cheerful legend of the Babbitt house is that of a woman who, preyed upon by a dreadful melancholy, hanged herself in the best bedroom. In times past there were more ghosts about the old blockhouse than could be numbered at any other spot in Rhode Island, but happily these are all laid, and the visitor at Babbitt's farm needs not fear that his rest will be disturbed by anything more dreadful than the early crowing of the cock that wakes the morn.

Chapter XIII

A Budget of Legends

THERE are some curious stories told concerning certain swamps and other isolated places in the Narragansett Country. In North Kingstown witches abode, who held their unhallowed sabbaths in Hell Hollow and Kettle Hole. Then there was that startling apparition, near Indian Corner, of the negro boy who had in some unexplained way lost his head; not as people are said to do when wool gathering, but by actual decapitation. The belated traveller who was unfortunate enough to encounter this shocking spectre told how it had seemed to be illuminated by a very unwholesome and suggestive blue flame, by the light of which its blind gropings and staggerings were quite visible. Just as it reached the crest of Pork Hill the fearful creature went off like a comet, with a sulphurous train of fire in its wake.

To match the headless negro there used to be a headless Indian, or rather the skeleton of an Indian, who had an unfortunate habit of mislaying his head and then making life a burden to any one who chanced to find it. How this particular ghost was discovered to

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have been an Indian I cannot say, but here is one of the stories told about him :

One summer evening a road-mender, just about to pick up his tools and dinner pail, discovered a skull lying by the side of the road where he had been digging.

"I wonder how I managed to throw that out without noticing it," he asked himself. Being interested in oddities, like many a more learned man, he wiped the skull off on a convenient portion of his leather breeches, and tucking it under his arm, trudged away towards home. His wife did not share his esthetic taste in curios, and when she met him at the door and discovered the nature of the burden he was carrying there was a fine scene. She dared him on his life to bring that nasty thing into her kitchen, and after one look into her determined face he promptly and wisely disclaimed any intention of doing so. Instead, he stuck it upon a pole at the back of the house and left it there.

It chanced to be a moonlight night. Just after midnight, when all out-of-doors was bright as day, there was a great clatter under the road-mender's window, so that his wife looked out to see what was happening. There in the road stood the headless skeleton, in a great state of excitement, shaking his bones till they rattled like a waggon-load of castanets. The woman fell back from the window in a great fright, but her husband merely called out, "If you are looking for your head you will find it stuck on the pole at the back of the house." Following this direction the visitor

secured his skull and, clapping it on as one would don a hat, he strode wrathfully down the road. Since that time, if local gossip is to be credited, the headless Indian has been frequently seen, standing guard over the buried members of his own race.

Over on the end of Conanicut, just above the Beavertail, a strange adventure once befel Ben Gladding, a fisherman. Gladding had been busy all day mending his nets, and when the full August moon came up, he shouldered his clam-rake and basket and started for the cove nearly opposite Bonnet Neck. It was almost as light as day, and the silence of the shore was only broken by the lapping of the waves upon the pebbly beach; an ideal night for clamming or for sentiment. As Ben worked his way down towards the point, his basket growing heavier and heavier, something woke in him that he did not understand. It was akin to poetry, but the fisherman could no more have put the first glimmering hint of it into words than a clam can spread its "crustaceous covering," as Halleck would say, and soar away into the empyrean.

At last he stopped hacking away at the shingle with his clam-rake, and straightened himself up to rest. As he turned his eyes towards Jones's Ledge he saw a vision that made him rub them. A strange vessel, ununlike any craft he had ever beheld, having a high stern, cross-yards upon her bowsprit, and sails curiously fashioned, came rapidly towards him. The oddest thing about this peculiar vessel was not her appearance,

though that was odd enough, but the fact that she seemed to have come over a shoal where no vessel should have come, and was sailing swiftly right in the eye of what wind there was, with her yards square and her sails rap full.

She passed within a biscuit toss of Ben, heading for the shore a little to the south of him, where he vainly expected to see her dashed to pieces; but she crossed the land as easily as she had traversed the water, and the last he saw of her she was heading for Graves's Point. Ben afterwards swore that she had no lights, but in the moonshine he could clearly see the flag that flew from her mainmast, spread out by the same mysterious wind that filled her sails, and that flag was adorned with a skull and cross-bones.

As every one knows, some old buccaneer, either the redoubtable Captain Kidd or some other, has a habit of taking nocturnal excursions in very much the fashion witnessed and described by honest Ben Gladding. Kidd's visitations have been particularly marked at points upon Long Island Sound. It is an open secret that he buried uncounted treasure and incidentally interred some all-too-confiding members of his crew to guard it, and more than one great house in Narragansett is said to have harboured the pirate and profited by his adventures.

At Indian Corner, near Slocumville, in North Kingstown, there is a rock from which blood was sometimes seen to flow. Of course superstition furnished

appropriate legends to account for the sanguinary fountain, but modern skepticism has suggested that perhaps the soil thereabouts contains considerable iron, and that iron when oxidised makes a red stain. Modern skepticism, by the way, is a deadly foe to many an entertaining legend. There is at least a substratum of historic fact to support the superstructure of fable concerning Bloody Rock. Indian Corner takes its name from the battle once fought there between the red men and whites. A number of those slain were buried in the immediate vicinity of the rock and bones have not infrequently been found near that place.

It is natural that the Narragansett Country should still preserve many traditions of the remarkable tribe from which its name is derived. With these tales are woven others in which the early white settlers fill the prominent rôles. Such a story is that of Joshua Tefft, the renegade, who had fled from Massachusetts after the commission of a crime, and took refuge with the Narragansetts. War between the races was then in progress and in order to show the genuineness of his apostacy he stained his hands with a white man's blood, bringing to the Narragansett camp the scalp of a miller whom he had surprised and slain. It was commonly believed that Tefft had killed both his father and his mother. To this man was attributed the planning of the swamp fortress, or fortified camp, that for so long made the Narragansetts almost invulnerable against the attacks of the settlers. Being caught after the great

swamp fight, the renegade was drawn and quartered.

Shorn of power and bereft of their broad possessions after their subjection the Indians long preserved the shadow of old customs, clinging to what shreds and patches of traditional observance they had preserved. Around Charlestown, where a few descendants of Miantonomi's followers still linger, the tribal life seemed most tenacious. Here the powerless Sachems received gifts of peage and were crowned with bands of wampum by the chief men of the dwindling tribe. Mr. William Kenyon, once a resident of Charlestown, thus described an Indian coronation of which he was a witness.

> She (the Princess Esther) was elevated on a large rock, so that the people might see her. The council surrounded her. There were present about twenty Indian soldiers with guns. They marched her to the rock. The Indians nearest the royal blood, in presence of her councillors, put the crown on her head. It was made of cloth, covered with blue and white peage. When the crown was put on the soldiers fired a royal salute and huzzaed in the Indian tongue. The ceremony was imposing and everything was conducted with great order. Then the soldiers waited on her to her house and fired salutes. There were five hundred natives present, besides others.

Esther's coronation took place about 1770. The coronation rock is described as being "about twelve rods north of the residence of Thomas Ninagret." It projects about three feet above ground and is a famous landmark.

Just over the border of North Kingstown, in East Greenwich, there is an acclivity known as Hopkins

Hill, once the scene of many a witches' frolic. A boulder in a nearby wood bears the ominous name of Witches Rock, and marks a spot where in a wretched hovel one of the most dreaded of the evil sisterhood brewed her philters and worked her unhallowed charms.

Of course there were scoffers at that day as in this; people who thought themselves wise beyond their generation. If all the neighbourhood shunned the witch-haunted forest they would not give way to such folly; on the contrary it was time to show to how little such notions amounted. The rock stood in what had been a little clearing, but was now overgrown with brambles and vines, with poison ivy and sumach and deadly nightshade. A man named Reynolds swore that he would plough up the ground about the rock. Many of the people living thereabouts went with him to see the daring feat accomplished. As every one knows—every one that is, who is versed in occult lore—there is a deadly animosity between witches and ploughshares, as between witches and horse-shoes, possibly because of an early fashion of heating the iron red-hot and making one suspected of witchcraft walk barefooted upon it. If the victim's feet were not burned she was a witch. If they were, she was simply unfortunate.

Reynolds had not ploughed half-way around the rock when the share stuck fast. Strain as they would, the oxen could not start it. Then the pin flew from the yoke, and upon a third trial the share cracked and the straining beasts tumbled upon their knees.

A crow flew from the forest and perching on a dead tree over the rock commenced such a cawing that Reynolds addressed it in language that exemplified neither Quaker self-control nor Puritan simplicity. Unfortunately the precise terms of his adjuration have been

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lost, but some cabalistic phrase he must have hit upon, for the crow was as suddenly and as obviously afflicted as the Jackdaw of Rheims after the Cardinal called for his bell and his book. Trying to take flight it dropped with a despairing squawk to the top of the rock, letting go in its fall the pin that had flown off from the ox-yoke. In a moment, before the astonished

eyes of the spectators, the crow had changed to the witch, with her bell-crowned hat and besom of nettle-stalks, and the way she glared at them made the boldest, even Reynolds himself, start back in a panic. In another moment the witch had vanished as the crow had done, and a large and remarkably black cat sprang from the top of the rock and scuttled into a hole at its base. They tried to dig it out, but the earth flew in as fast as it was shovelled out and at last they gave it up. Reynolds struck the rock so lustily with the broken ploughshare that the dent may be seen there to this day.

Of all the tales that old wives tell and children remember when the wind howls at night, the most dreadful is that of the German vessel that sailed in 1756 from the Palatinate for Philadelphia, with passengers and merchandise, and met her untimely end upon the shores of Manisees, or Block Island. Set out of her course by gales, the voyage was a chapter of misfortunes, to fill the measure of which the crew mutinied and killed the captain, driving the passengers to the cabin, where they were held prisoners and slowly starved. What food they were able to procure from the wretches who had become their masters was doled out at exorbitant prices. A cup of water cost twenty guilders, and fifty six dollars paid for a single biscuit, so that presently the crew had all the ready money there was on board, and the passengers saved them the trouble of committing outright murder by obligingly dying of starvation.

At last, when there seemed nothing more to be gained, when they had secured all the ready money on board, when they had looted whatever of value they could lay their hands upon, the mutineers took to the boats, leaving the few surviving passengers to their fate. That fate, merciless to the last, flung the *Palatine* upon the rocks of Block Island, where the wreckers soon found her and swarmed aboard, stripping the hull of whatever the crew had left and only rescuing the passengers to leave them robbed and penniless. Having gotten all that they could, the shore sharks set fire to the hull, and the tide lifted and bore the blazing wreck away. It is told that one poor crazed woman, who had hidden on board, was driven by the fire to the stern of the ship, where she stood screaming and wringing her hands till the flames enveloped her.

Of course the story did not end there. Year after year the blazing ship came back and the people who had watched the tragedy saw it repeated each twelvemonth; saw the flames rise from hull to rigging, and sweep along the side of the ship, each port a roaring tongue of fire; saw the maniac woman rush aft and wring her hands, and above all heard the screams of her despair.

There are variations of the story of the *Palatine*, one of which has been set in verse by Whittier.

> Old wives spinning their webs of tow,
> Or rocking weirdly to and fro
> In and out the peat's dull glow,

And old men mending their nets of twine,
Talk together of dream and sign,
Talk of the lost ship *Palatine*,—

The ship that, a hundred years before,
Freighted deep with its goodly store,
In the gales of the equinox went ashore.

The eager islanders one by one
Counted the shots of her signal gun,
And heard the crash when she drove right on!

Into the teeth of death she sped:
(May God forgive the hands that fed
The false lights over the rocky Head!)

O men and brothers! what sights were there!
White upturned faces, hands stretched in prayer!
Where waves had pity, could ye not spare?

Down swooped the wreckers, like birds of prey,
Tearing the heart of the ship away,
And the dead had never a word to say.

And then, with ghastly shimmer and shine
Over the rocks and the seething brine,
They burned the wreck of the *Palatine*.

In their cruel hearts, as they homeward sped,
"The sea and the rocks are dumb," they said:
"There 'll be no reckoning with the dead."

But the year went round, and when once more
Along their foam-white curves of shore
They heard the line-storm rave and roar,

Behold! again, with shimmer and shine,
Over the rocks and the seething brine,
The flaming wreck of the *Palatine!*

So, haply in fitter words than these,
Mending their nets on their patient knees
They tell the legend of Manisees.

Nor looks nor tones a doubt betray;
"It is known to us all," they quietly say;
"We too have seen it in our day."

Is there, then, no death for a word once spoken?
Was never a deed but left its token
Written on tables never broken?

Do the elements subtle reflections give?
Do pictures of all the ages live
On Nature's infinite negative,

Which, half in sport, in malice half,
She shows at times, with shudder or laugh,
Phantom and shadow in photograph?

For still, on many a moonless night,
From Kingston Head and from Montauk light
The spectre kindles and burns in sight.

Now low and dim, now clear and higher,
Leaps up the terrible Ghost of Fire,
Then, slowly sinking, the flames expire.

And the wise Sound skippers, though skies be fine,
Reef their sails when they see the sign
Of the blazing wreck of the *Palatine!*

Lest a skeptical reader should dream that the spectral appearance of the fated *Palatine* was simply the invention of superstitious minds, I would state that the "Palatine light" was frequently seen during the middle of the eighteenth century, and men who scouted the idea of a supernatural appearance tried to fit to it a scientific explanation, but they never succeeded.

Dr. Aaron C. Willey, a physician of Block Island, wrote in 1811 to a friend in New York as follows:

This curious irradiation rises from the ocean near the northern part of the island. Its appearance is nothing different from a blaze of fire; whether it actually touches the water or merely hovers over it is uncertain, for I am informed that no person has been near enough to decide accurately. Sometimes it is small, resembling the light through a distant window; at others expanding to the highness of a ship with all her canvas spread. When large it displays either pyramidal form, or three constant streams. This light often seems to be in a constant state of mutation; decreasing by degrees it becomes invisible, or resembles a lucid point; then shining anew, sometimes with a sudden flare, at others by a gradual increasement to its former size. . . . It is seen at all seasons of the year, and for the most part in the calm which precedes an easterly or south-easterly storm.

The above authority states that he was twice an eye-witness to this phenomenon. Another witness to the Palatine light was Mr. Benjamin Congdon, who published an account of it in the *Newport Mercury*, March 23, 1878. In this article he says:

About the burning *Palatine* ship you speak of in your interesting papers, I may say that I have seen her eight or ten times or more. In those days nobody doubted her being sent by an Almighty power to punish those wicked men who murdered her passengers and crew. After the last of these were dead she was never more seen. We lived when I was young in Charlestown, directly opposite Block Island, where we used to have a plain view of the burning ship.

Tradition affirms that of the passengers of the ship who reached the shore alive only two recovered from the terrific hardships to which they had been subjected. These married in the island, one of them, known as "Tall Katten," becoming the wife of a negro.

The reference made by Whittier to the nefarious

practices of Block Island wreckers has a basis of fact, or else those nimble scavengers of the rocks have been much maligned. To fishermen, toiling with their lines and nets for a precarious livelihood, the chance wreck that the sea drove almost to their doors was a golden opportunity not to be neglected. Even honest salvage was lucrative work and appropriation opened a short cut to opulence. When the storm had destroyed so much it must have seemed but a trifling dereliction to make away with the odds and ends remaining. The wrecker might have argued that the ocean was the actual highwayman and that he was only a gleaner, a picker up of inconsiderable trifles. When the greater robber failed to secure a victim, what could be more natural than for the human limpets that fed on his margin to try in their small way to assist destiny. It could not be charged as a crime that a man should move a light from one tempest swept ledge to another, even though some foolish pilot out in the night was setting his helm to steer by the inconstant beacon.

If it is true, as has been told, that an old fisherman tied a lantern to the scrawny neck of the only horse in town and then set the animal loose to browse upon the scanty turf above the rocks of Clay Head, it must be remembered that he was not sure that a vessel would come ashore, nor did he do this deed through malice nor for any ugly motive, but simply that he might gain an honest livelihood. His method was not better nor worse than that of thousands of men, counted reputable

in their communities, whose lives are devoted to the acquisition of other men's wealth.

The bodies of the ship-wrecked sailors and passengers did not invariably drift ashore after a vessel was wrecked. Frequently a whole crew was saved—so it is evident that when deaths occurred from the misplacing of shore lights they were to be regarded not as ugly murders, but in the light of mysterious dispensations of Providence.

The legend of Lee, a Block Island fisherman and wrecker who afterwards took to the high seas and to bolder if not more evil courses, will serve as a companion piece to the tale of the *Palatine.*

Captain Lee, having followed the life of a roving trader for several years, finally brought his vessel into a Spanish port, where he secretly shipped more arms and gunpowder than a peaceful merchantman might be thought to require, and gathered about him one of the most villainous crews that ever fought in a fo'c'sle. Having got his men safe on board, the captain broached a barrel of spirits with which they were soon drugged into a peaceful insensibility, which was the best possible guarantee that they would be on hand when wanted. While these and other preparations were going forward, a man appeared and begged the captain's attendance upon a lady who waited at the quay and desired speech with him.

His curiosity piqued by this message, Lee gave an extra hitch to his waist-band and swaggered out upon

the wharf, where to his disappointment, instead of some sloe-eyed hussey challenging his gallantry, he found himself face to face, if the figure may be allowed, with a lady deeply veiled in widow's mourning, who rode upon a snow-white palfrey.

"I hear that you sail for the New England Colonies, Señor," said a sad voice behind the veil. "I desire to become a passenger in your vessel."

"Nay," said Lee without taking the trouble to answer politely; "my ship is full enough of other cargo; I take no passengers."

The lady, not to be rebuffed, renewed her request and in her eagerness put aside her veil. The first thing that Lee noticed was that her hand was covered with rings of price; then he saw a face so beautiful that for a moment he forgot the jewels. He looked about and observed the group of servants, the richness of everything pertaining to this lady. No doubt she was wealthy and——

"I bethink me," said Lee, removing his hat as he spoke, "that I have spare room for a passenger like yourself, if you can put up with a trader's accommodations."

"I must have my palfrey, too," added the widow.

A refusal sprang to the captain's lips, but he spoke with unusual courtesy: "Your palfrey, too, by all means," said he.

A few words more and the matter was settled. The next day the widow and her servants embarked and

the ship set sail for her long voyage. Scarce had they sailed down the land astern of them than the captain called up the servants of the Spanish lady, and after a few words delivered them over to his crew. Whatever became of them the legend does not inform us in detail, beyond the fact that several bodies were that night thrown to the sharks, and the lady was left alone in the hands of as merciless a set of corsairs as ever hoisted skull and cross-bones.

Then Lee went to the cabin which had been assigned to the beautiful widow, but found it locked. Too late she realised the character of the man in whose power she had placed herself. As he burst in the door she succeeded in eluding him, and in another moment had clambered upon the rail of the vessel and plunged into the ocean.

The pirate was enraged over what he was pleased to consider his ill-luck, and not even the treasure which the lady had brought on board consoled him for her escape. His eye fell upon the white palfrey, and with an oath he ordered that flung overboard also. For awhile the crew amused themselves by watching the creature's efforts to swim after the ship, but at last, with a great cry, it sank. Then Lee turned to his cabin, sullen and silent. His men feared him, telling each other that he had the evil eye; one of them he stabbed in a drunken fury and threw his body overboard, and his ruffians crossed themselves, being sure that the shriek they heard was nothing less than the neigh of the white horse.

After many adventures, in the course of which vessels were sacked and set adrift in flames, and prisoners made to walk the plank, or worse, the fame of Lee's vessel was wide-spread, and she was hunted from Massachusetts Bay to the Spanish main. At last the buccaneers brought her to Block Island and then fired and set her adrift, after removing everything of value. After that the captain and a few chosen associates essayed to live ashore for awhile, in riotous enjoyment of their wealth; but one night something like a burning vessel was seen approaching the island, and among those who went down to the rocky shore to watch it was Lee. As the wreck came towards that bold coast, he saw with horror that the waves were covered with the bodies of those who had been his victims, among them the form of the beautiful widow, whose veil floated like a pall upon the blood-red waters. In advance of all swam a white horse, that sprang upon the shore and made directly for the terror-striken pirate. Controlled by some destiny against which he was powerless, he mounted the spectral steed and was borne away. Some say that he was taken into the sea and drowned, which seems too mild an issue for such a bloody career; others aver that he is still riding, and as the destination of the sailor on horseback is proverbial, it is assumed that when his long, involuntary gallop is over Lee, the pirate, will meet the fate he so richly deserves, at the hands of the unpopular personage that carried off Tom Walker.

Dana's great story, based upon a version of this legend, was widely read a generation ago. It is not unlikely that the same mysterious appearance which superstition has associated with the return of the *Palatine* ship may have been the genesis of the story of the Corsair Lee.

Among the many folk-tales of the Narragansett country there are not a few told of one James Scribbins, a noted preacher among the Friends many years ago. He was not bright and he lacked education, but when inspired by "the Spirit" he preached eloquently. On one occasion, having been introduced to a man of considerable intellectual culture, the latter expressed surprise that Scribbins could not explain the meaning of a not uncommon word.

"You used it correctly a little while ago, when you were preaching," he exclaimed.

"Yes," said Scribbins, "I knew what it meant then."

The Quakers loved to point to Scribbins as an illustration of their favourite article of belief, that the Spirit animated even fools and made the dull His mouthpiece in the expression of inspired truth.

One day Scribbins was sleeping under a tree and awoke with a jumping toothache, which he was sure he could not possibly survive. After enduring the agony till he thought it must shortly make an end of him, he managed to write on a bit of paper, "James Scribbins died of a tooth-ache." This he pinned upon the tree and laid down beneath it to die, but presently his pain

was assuaged and forgetting all about the notice he had written he went on his way. It was found by a neighbour, and the report of his death spread abroad, but the search for his body resulted in a conviction that the report of his death, like a similar bit of news concerning Mark Twain, had been "grossly exaggerated."

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